

**NEGOTIATING TROPES OF MADNESS: TRAUMA AND
IDENTITY IN POST-YUGOSLAV CINEMAS**

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the Faculty of Humanities

2013

DEJAN LEVI

SCHOOL OF ARTS, LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	5
ABSTRACT	6
DECLARATION	7
COPYRIGHT STATEMENT	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
THE AUTHOR	9
Chapter 1: Introducing tropes of madness: trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cinemas	
1.1. Introduction	10
1.2. Rationale for the 'post-Yugoslav' framework	18
1.3. Research contexts	24
1.4. On corpus selection	40
1.5. Structure of the thesis	44
Chapter 2: Theoretical framework	
2.1. Introduction	47
2.2. Understanding the Yugoslav break-up and its consequences	47
2.3. Post-Yugoslav nation-building and film: a theoretical interface	51
2.4. Tropes of madness from a semantic/syntactic perspective	56
2.5. The trope of madness as rhetorical device	64
<u>Section 1</u>: Critical perspectives on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav ideologies: the breakdown of the asylum	
Chapter 3: The inside-out asylum: Carnavalesque play and 'ideological demobilisation' in <i>Burlesque Tragedy</i> (Marković, 1995) and <i>Marshall Tito's Spirit</i> (Brešan, 1999)	
3.1. Introduction	67
3.2. What characterises the asylum-based trope of madness?	71

3.3.	Madness and the semantic disarming of the politicised symbol	78
3.4.	The ‘carnavalesque’ component of the inside-out asylum trope	97
3.5.	Conclusions	100

Chapter 4: The inside-out asylum and the road movie in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2006): where madness meets the nation-building discourse

4.1.	Introduction	102
4.2.	The long and winding road (of post-Socialist transition)	105
4.3.	Film culture in a UN protectorate	111
4.4.	The road and the asylum: Thematising ‘Kosova 1999’	115
4.5.	Conclusions	132

Section 2: Affective perspectives on post-Yugoslav trauma: the fragmentation of diegetic unity

Chapter 5: Madness and the conventional representation of trauma: Objective vs. subjective realities

5.1.	Introduction	135
5.2.	Trauma, madness and audio-visual narrative media	138
5.3.	The ‘multiple realities’ trope of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas	147
5.4.	The trauma of loss and displacement: <i>Loving Glances</i> and <i>Fuse</i>	153
5.5.	Traumas of post-Yugoslav transition: <i>Mirage</i>	160
5.6.	Conclusions	163

Chapter 6: Madness and the avant-garde approach to trauma: The 1999 NATO bombardment in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 2000)

6.1.	Introduction	165
6.2.	Milutin Petrović and <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i>	168
6.3.	Conclusions	196

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1. Re-visiting the core research objectives	198
7.2. Re-visiting the thesis research questions	200
7.3. Contributions of the study	210

Bibliography	214
---------------------	------------

Filmography	222
--------------------	------------

(Final word count, excluding front matter and bibliography: 82,232)

LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1. Violeta's musical performances in <i>Burlesque Tragedy</i> (Marković, 1995)	82
Fig. 3.2. Serbian turbo-folk star Ceca and wartime paramilitary Arkan	83
Fig. 3.3. Kusturica's wedding scenes: <i>When Father was Away on Business</i> (1985), <i>Black Cat White Cat</i> (1998), <i>Underground</i> (1995), and <i>Promise me this</i> , (2007)	84
Fig. 3.4. Basketball and fantasies of escape in <i>Burlesque Tragedy</i> (Marković, 1995)	86
Fig. 3.5. Vlade Divac and Dražen Petrović in <i>Once Brothers</i> (Tolajian, 2010) and the 'flag confiscation' incident	86
Fig. 4.1. The asylum is abandoned in <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	118
Fig. 4.2. Nation-building lessons in <i>Fuse</i> (Žalica, 2003)	120
Fig. 4.3. Staging national identity in <i>Fuse</i> (Žalica, 2003)	120
Fig. 4.4. Ambitious rhetoric falling on deaf ears in <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	121
Fig. 4.5. Kukum's provocative response to exclusion in <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	123
Fig. 4.6. Closing shots of <i>Marshall Tito's Spirit</i> (Brešan, 2000) and <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	127
Fig. 4.7. Hasan, Mara and Kukum 'feel' the landscape in <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	131
Fig. 4.8. Hasan's efforts to generate new spatial experiences in <i>Kukumi</i> (Qosja, 2005)	131
Fig. 6.1. Disruption of temporal singularity and linearity in <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i> (Petrović, 1999)	177
Fig. 6.2. Boris's ultimate reveal in <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i> (Petrović, 1999)	182
Fig. 6.3. Aggressor vs. victim points of identification in <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i> (Petrović, 1999)	187
Fig. 6.4. Unsettling the stability of the spectator's gaze in <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i> (Petrović, 1999)	187
Fig. 6.5. The construction of Djordje's point-of-view in <i>Land of Truth, Love and Freedom</i> (Petrović, 1999)	189

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how madness has been used in post-Yugoslav cinemas to facilitate thinking about experiences of the break-up of the SFRY throughout the 1990s and 2000s, its consequences and implications for the future. The study conceptualises post-Yugoslav film cultures as public spheres in which artistic and industrial practices are often combined to create meaning around the core themes of trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cultures. Working with seven feature-length titles from a range of post-Yugoslav successor states (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Macedonia and Kosovo) I illustrate how images of madness have been essential in the cultural processing of events of the 1990s. Whilst featuring individuals suffering mental instabilities and disturbances, and sometimes asylums or mental health institutions, I contend such films are not ultimately concerned – on a thematic level – with mental health, but instead focus on the use of such characters in a metaphoric capacity for engaging core themes of Yugoslav break-up, conflicts, and difficulties of subsequent transition.

Using the semantic/syntactic approach to genre, I identify two common ways in which madness is used on a textual level to engage these core themes. The first of these, the ‘inside-out asylum trope of madness’, is concerned with the use of the asylum in films which assess critically the dominant political ideologies of the successor states in question at a time when political pluralism was not yet established by the transition process. Films discussed include *Burlesque Tragedy* (Marković, 1995), *Marshall Tito's Spirit* (Brešan, 1999), and *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005). The second trope is the ‘multiple realities trope of madness’ in which the presentation of diegetic reality on screen is adapted to reflect various conceptualisations of trauma and loss arising from Yugoslav break-up and transition. Here the films include *Loving Glances* (Karanović, 2003), *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003), *Mirage* (Ristovski, 2004) and *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 2000). Across the films selected, it is madness which ultimately provides a diverse pool of metaphors and images for an assessment of Yugoslavia's traumatic demise and the ensuing process of picking through the debris of its ideology, cultural practices, values and ways of living for precisely what might be salvageable and what should be discarded.

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

1. The author of this thesis owns certain copyright or related rights in it (the “Copyright”) and he has given The University of Manchester certain rights to use such Copyright, including for administrative purposes.
2. Copies of this thesis, either in full or in extracts and whether in hard or electronic copy, may be made **only** in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (as amended) and regulations issued under it or, where appropriate, in accordance with licensing agreements which the University has from time to time. This page must form part of any such copies made.
3. The ownership of certain Copyright, patents, designs, trade marks and other intellectual property (the “Intellectual Property”) and any reproductions of copyright works in the thesis, for example graphs and tables (“Reproductions”), which may be described in this thesis, may not be owned by the author and may be owned by third parties. Such Intellectual Property and Reproductions cannot and must not be made available for use without the prior written permission of the owner(s) of the relevant Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions.
4. Further information on the conditions under which disclosure, publication and commercialisation of this thesis, the Copyright and any Intellectual Property and/or Reproductions described in it may take place is available in the University IP Policy (see <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=487>), in any relevant Thesis restriction declarations deposited in the University Library, The University Library’s regulations (see <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/library/aboutus/regulations>) and in The University’s policy on Presentation of Theses.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am hugely grateful to the numerous people who provided the support, encouragement and advice I needed to undertake and complete my postgraduate studies. First of all, a huge debt of gratitude is owed to my academic supervisors, Dr. Adelina Angusheva-Tihanov, Prof. Stephen Hutchings and Prof. Christopher Perriam for their patience and assistance with everything from preparing the first proposal to finalising the finished thesis and, perhaps most importantly, for fostering an enjoyable and encouraging atmosphere in which to undertake postgraduate study.

I would also like to acknowledge all of the other staff within the Russian and Eastern European Studies department who kindly found time to assist with whatever queries I had, Dr. Ewa Ochman and Dr. Rachel Platonov especially.

Amongst the other postgraduate students in the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures I have made many close friends that I hope will remain in my life long after the completion of the thesis. Research can sometimes be a lonesome activity so, for me, the company of like-minded fellow students has been not only essential to the completion of the work but also one of the rewards of the whole experience.

I was also fortunate enough to have had the financial assistance of an Arts and Humanities Research Council studentship which was essential in making my studies possible in the first place and would like to thank all those whose work ensures that such support is available to students embarking upon doctoral studies.

Finally, for all that I have been able to achieve and enjoy, whether in terms of studies or beyond, I wish to thank my ever loving and supportive parents, Emil and Vesna Levi, who continue to amaze and inspire me with their example. Sandie, love of my life, has also been on hand throughout with endless belief, understanding, and support without which none of this would have been possible. My caring little sister, Sandra, who was standing up for me before she was even standing up – and my remarkable grandparents, Marika and Staniša, also provided valuable encouragement and perspective and it is to these people that I owe the greatest thanks and wish to dedicate the thesis.

THE AUTHOR

I completed my BA (First Class Honours) in English Language and Literature at the University of Liverpool in 2007 and then an MA in Screen Studies at the University of Manchester in 2009. Although I grew up in Liverpool, I am fortunate to have two languages and cultures having spent the early years of my life up until 1992 in Novi Sad – and as a result have always had a special interest in the cinema of former Yugoslavia and its successor states. My academic interest however began during my MA studies when I wrote my dissertation on Serbian neo-noir genre cinema in the post-Milošević years. It was at this time that I became interested in exploring further the complex relationships between a society undergoing staggeringly rapid socio-political change, shocking violence and unprecedented ideological transitions – and its audio-visual culture. I began my doctoral studies in 2009 and have presented parts of this work at various workshops and seminars at the University of Manchester. Alongside the thesis I have also taught an undergraduate module on post-communist cinemas at the University of Manchester and worked as an NCTJ-qualified journalist.

Chapter 1:

Introducing tropes of madness: trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cinemas

1.1. Introduction

How is madness defined? Throughout the ages it has typically constituted a perceived deviation from norms – variably established within the fields of culture, politics, science or medicine. Each specific definition therefore begs the question: how is this deviation from a norm manifested? What is its meaning and cause? Who is responsible for making judgments about madness and what happens to the mad?

These questions have been almost universal throughout human social development – and yet the manner of their address has often provided a telling insight into specific limits of knowledge, hierarchies of power and the position of the individual relative to the social collective, considerations that go to the core of what defined various societies throughout history, whether in the classical civilisations of Greek and Roman empires, in medieval Europe, or twentieth-century America. Indeed in all three of these examples, it could be argued that contemporaneous thinking about madness (and the types of actions that this thinking gave rise to) gives us an insight into many other far-reaching dynamics governing social life in a particular time and place. 14th-17th century European witch hunts, the mass murder of mental health patients in Nazi concentration camps, and the use of electroshock therapy in 1950's-70's USA represent some of the most shocking methods that some Western societies have exercised in response to the perceived challenge of madness. And yet though all are unquestionably brutal, these events provide evidence of differing answers to the questions above.

Madness is consequently at once an evocative but elusive term – a ubiquitous signifier with a slippery relationship to multiple signified meanings. Indeed further evidence of this historical and cultural variability can be found in a consideration of the status of madness in the socio-cultural formation within which this writing is being produced (the UK circa 2013). Here the discourse around madness has fragmented into a new discourse on mental illness – to be approached in exactly the same way that other illnesses and diseases are¹ and for which the continued use of the term ‘madness’ is

¹ Interestingly, the shift towards a discourse of mental illness has not achieved a complete break with the ambiguities historically associated with diagnosing madness. Indeed, various efforts to produce

politically incorrect – and a second residual lay meaning where madness stands for a deviation in thought or behaviour which is a conscious choice rather than a result of an illness (e.g. used to label somebody as eccentric or to discredit the flawed reasoning of an opponent, a discursive strategy evident in various guises across numerous political and cultural formations).

Therefore, although madness might have been defined variously along the lines of sexuality, disability, ignorance, education or health, amongst other things,² these differing historical notions have in common a fundamental dynamic relating to the negotiation of certain significant limits – through their transgression, enforcement and/or reconfiguration. These boundaries might be the indicator of the limits of human knowledge when it comes to explaining certain speech or action that differs from a perceived norm – or they could equally represent the limits of socially acceptable identities or opinions as established by differing dominant ideologies (arising from politics or religion for example). Madness (as mental illness) can be a deviation from an ideal as established by a modern medical discourse on health but it can equally be a deviation from the idealised subject of a religious discourse (as evident with the 1975 DSM in which homosexuality was included) or the idealised subject of a political discourse (as in examples where a political opponent might be discredited with labels of insanity). In this sense therefore, madness is defined in the *response* to a particular person or group's speech or action – it is the reaction to a perceived transgression of limits that introduces madness as an interpretive framework rather than it being inherent to the original act itself.

But what is it about madness that could provoke the fear, cruelty and violence seen in some of the examples discussed earlier? Today, in a quite different capacity, madness continues to require solutions with the modern successor to madness, mental illness, being a priority for treatment, albeit in a less coercive manner than previously (though sufferers are still sometimes stigmatised, despite the best efforts of various action groups). Of course, for individuals suffering from mental disturbances of emotion or reason, the experience can

scientifically-informed definitions of mental illness have continued to run into conceptions of otherness defined by other non-scientific discourses. For example, homosexuality was only removed from the American Psychiatric Association's manual of mental disorders (The Committee on Nomenclature and Statistics of the American Psychiatric Association, 1952) in 1975. Moreover, the fact that the first edition of the text listed just over 100 disorders, while the most recent – published only three decades later – now counts almost 500, provides further evidence of the subjectivity which continues to define diagnosis (and, often, erodes the scientific credibility of the discipline).

² For a socio-historical account of how different societies and cultures have thought about madness it is worth consulting the lifelong work of the late historian of madness Porter (1996, 2002).

be debilitating – but what about for those others who have throughout history sought to act upon the mad with their own interests in mind? In many instances it could be argued that the confrontation with the aforementioned limits of everything from human knowledge about our own internal mental workings to the boundaries of socially acceptable identities proved profoundly disturbing for those confronted with it, something which, especially in some historical periods,³ established the mad as an object of grim fascination, inspiring in equal measure morbid curiosity and unalloyed fears.

It is perhaps precisely these aspects of madness that have made it so appealing within the realm of art and culture throughout the ages, with madness in various guises informing to some extent everything from Romantic poetry or Surrealist painting to Dadaist visual arts. Cinema too, even from its early roots, abounds with evidence that it would become the art form with the greatest attachment to madness. The early silent cinema classic, *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (Wiene, 1920), famously made use of madness in order to communicate a forbidden and taboo message, wherein a politically dangerous critique of the Weimar state is made possible by the use of a distancing device: the film's images and events are ultimately shown to be the raving dream of a madman.⁴ Likewise an early Japanese silent feature, *A Page of Madness* (Kinugasa, 1926), made use of early visual innovation in cutting and narrative in an attempt to re-create the experience of madness for audiences. These early silent-era examples provide evidence of what would become key aspects of the lasting appeal of madness to filmmakers: its potential to be a device for facilitating engagement with issues of power and identity in a society and, secondly, its suitability for adaptation into the visual (soon to be audio-visual) form in the effort to convey subjective experiences of the world via the screen.

However, despite being a major preoccupation for filmmakers of various times and places, images of madness are not a feature of all cinematic cultures and indeed, even where they have featured, it is not the case that such images are ever-present. One characteristic which can be observed is that images of madness are often produced following experiences of extreme emotional and mental stress, generated by periods of social upheaval and instability in the wake of traumatic crises such as wars, economic collapses or natural disasters. In such contexts, madness often provides a potent way of

³ See Foucault (1967) for more.

⁴ It should however be noted that this interpretation, originally advocated by Kracauer in *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947), has been strongly disputed recently by Elsaesser (2000).

conceptualising the traumatic shocks of such experience or indeed of examining value systems that might best serve the effort to move beyond such events (or those that might have caused the crises). One such context is provided by the protracted events of the break-up of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) throughout the 1990s and 2000s which saw the former federation fragment into what are now seven separate political entities. The process entailed not only multiple armed conflicts along ethno-national lines but also an ideological transition from self-management socialism practiced in Yugoslavia for a number of decades to one of liberal democracy modelled on Western institutional models and accompanied with a neo-liberal economic system. Within such a cultural context, images of madness (here featuring asylum settings and individuals experiencing severe mental disruptions – outlined in the corpus selection section later in the chapter) became prominent as a varied range of devices for portraying and thinking about the diverse experiences of the period.

Indeed, it is important to note that the cultural use of tropes of madness is a uniquely post-Yugoslav cinematic feature which was not evident in the cinema of the SFRY in the same way. Post-Yugoslav cinemas have been much more likely to introduce madness in a direct and explicit manner at the textual level, either by recourse to asylum settings or otherwise depictions of characters' 'mad' internal subjective experiences of the world. Yugoslav cinema meanwhile, although featuring many examples of marginalised and outcast characters (particularly during the so-called Black Wave period) did not explicitly introduce madness at the textual level to the same extent – typically resorting more often to subtler techniques such as narrative and dialogic exposition to construct outsider characters, as in films such as *When I am Dead and Gone* (Pavlović, 1967) and *Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator* (Makavejev, 1967) for example.⁵ Both of these films feature protagonists whose mental state is clearly disturbed in various ways – but no direct access to this is granted for the spectator. Madness is therefore not invoked on the textual level to the same extent as it often is in the post-Yugoslav titles to be discussed later. Similarly, perhaps owing to the taboo of acknowledging that mental

⁵ One exception to this is the late Yugoslav production of *Déjà vu* (Marković, 1987) in which childhood traumas and political repression have a massively destabilising effect on the protagonist's mental stability in adult life. In this case, some expressive cinematographic techniques are used in order to reflect this state for audiences – rather than evidence of it being confined solely to dialogic and narrative exposition (i.e. other characters' comments about the strangeness of the protagonist or scenes in which he can be seen behaving strangely). The result is that madness is more explicitly present at a textual level – also informing to a greater extent the spectator's relation the text.

health problems did exist even under the socialist system, images of asylums were quite rare in Yugoslav cinema. Aside from *Ward No. 6* (Pintilie, 1973) there are almost no asylums evident in the period 1945-1990. On the other hand, as will become evident from the ensuing discussion in chapters 3 and 4, the years during the break-up and immediately after (1991-2008) have seen almost every successor state producing at least one film in which mental hospitals and asylums feature. The same is true for films depicting the subjective inner turmoil of traumatised characters losing their grip on reality, as chapter 5 and 6 will outline. These tropes of madness are therefore integral to cultural reflections upon the wide-ranging implications of traumatic experience, crisis and the effort to move beyond it in the post-Yugoslav context.

While the films directly depicting armed conflict have been extensively studied in literature on how post-Yugoslav cultures have approached the break-up and its consequences (see Iordanova (2001), Levi (2007), Bjelić (2005), Longinović (2005) as examples), other less direct engagements have thus far received far less attention. It is the primary research objective of this thesis to consider how madness has been used in post-Yugoslav cinemas to provide ways of thinking about experiences of the break-up of Yugoslavia and its consequences. The thesis proposes to situate the use of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas relative to two core themes of post-Yugoslav cinematic culture – those of trauma and identity, arguably two of the most recurrently featuring preoccupations in all post-Yugoslav cultures, although each is framed in various specific ways within different media across the individual successor republics.

Thus in order to begin understanding the cultural significance of madness in such cinemas, it therefore becomes essential to consider first, at least briefly, the contexts of production, and the place of trauma therein, before arriving at the questions posed by the films themselves. For the populations of formerly socialist countries the collapse of the existing political and economic system in the USSR and Yugoslavia, towards the end of the twentieth century, entailed significant traumas – notwithstanding the fact that, for some, the change might have been long-desired and/or welcome. In Yugoslavia, this process had both various aspects in common with the remainder of the former Eastern bloc and also some highly specific ones, namely that the Yugoslav system differed in various ways from its equivalents elsewhere and the fact that its dissolution entailed numerous armed conflicts,

which was largely not the case elsewhere (in Europe at least). For most citizens of former Yugoslavia, regardless of personal circumstances, this period entailed, to varying extents:

- A direct and immediate experience of armed and violent conflict and all that it entails (for those who were drafted/volunteered to fight or otherwise those civilians living near to the battlefronts). Since this was a civil war which involved, at least on one level, a clash of competing nationalisms, the violence committed often took on exceptionally shocking forms (sexual violence, ethnic cleansing and crimes against civilians, etc.).
- An indirect experience of proximate conflict mediated by television and print media. The nature of late twentieth century media technologies (especially those connected to television broadcasting) ensured that this experience was both continuous and visceral.
- Pressure exerted by political elites and their mass media mouthpieces to define allegiances, which usually involved the adoption of extreme animosity towards ‘enemies’ who actually often shared the same/similar cultural, familial and social space.
- A struggle for daily survival in the wake of extreme economic collapse and the breakdown of previous supply systems for everyday goods and food.
- Related to the above, mass unemployment and the disappearance of much of the labour market, leading to significant pressures on traditional social and familial roles.
- The huge psychological impact of the apparent failure of socialism and Yugoslavism as an ideological, political and social system. Unlike in many of the former Eastern bloc states, this system had enjoyed considerable levels of genuine support and popularity for a number of decades (especially relative to neighbouring socialisms in Romania and Hungary, for example).

The above list is clearly not comprehensive and varies in relevance depending on specifically which areas/ethnicities/social classes in former Yugoslavia are in question. However, it is evident that, almost universally, the traumas of loss of physical safety, material security, ideological certainty and stability of identity were significant enough to everywhere leave some lasting mark.

Cultural activity in the region has provided a space for understanding these experiences, as well as their continuing bearing upon life in the successor states which emerged from the Yugoslav federation. In addition to assessing the traumatic legacies of this period, artistic and cultural activity has also been highly active in examining notions of collective identity following not only the break-up of Yugoslavia, the collapse of the USSR and the demise of communism as the dominant ideological principle of these societies – but also in response to shifting dynamics of global power such as the expansion of the EU (and increase in attendant discourses around Europe for example). We could therefore make the generalisation that the cinematic cultures of post-Yugoslav successor states can be broadly defined as having had the following thematic concerns during the protracted period of Yugoslav break-up:

- The exploration of processes of national identity formation in the successor states which becomes a primary activity at the highest political level but is also hugely evident within cultural life, sport and media – all of which exerts new influence and pressure on the way individuals think about and understand themselves in relation to those around them.
- The sudden need to reconcile and resolve the conflicts between a lived experience of Yugoslav socialism (and its attendant ideological aspects) with the fact that such a system – which had promised to last into eternity – was no longer in place; in other words, a historical assessment of the experience and legacy of Yugoslavia and the consequences of its collapse on conditions of life in successor states.
- More immediate psychological damage caused by the stresses of witnessing and/or participating in the conflicts of the 1990s (briefly in Slovenia, then much more extensively in Croatia and Bosnia, and finally, towards the end of the decade, in Kosovo).

These concerns have occupied much of post-Yugoslav cultural output, whether in literature, music, or the visual arts. Cinema in particular has proved to be a highly active site of negotiation for producing various (sometimes contradictory) perspectives on such experiences. Of course the themes are not everywhere approached to the same extent (Slovenia for example has made very few films directly featuring conflict but has a much greater number of titles in which the primary thematic concern revolves around national

identity, relations to Europe and consequences of EU integration) but I contend that such a thematic generalisation is largely tenable and supported by existing literature on the cinemas of the period.

This thesis therefore proposes to examine madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas relative to these core cultural preoccupations – an assessment of traumatic legacies arising from the experiences of Yugoslav break-up and the address of continuing challenges for the future in post-Yugoslav successor states, one of which entails a sustained focus on the building of new collective identities supporting the political formations which emerged from the protracted fragmentation. As outlined above, madness is particularly attractive to artists and filmmakers for approaching themes of crisis and turmoil – and all of the films featuring madness in various guises in post-Yugoslav cinemas have focused thematically on the core threads of trauma and identity that have dominated cultural life in the successor societies. The overriding goal of this thesis is to outline what kinds of thinking about the break-up of Yugoslavia and its consequences is facilitated by images of madness in these films and what it indicates more widely about the epistemological parameters within which trauma and identity are considered in such a cultural context. In order to answer this question, the thesis aims to answer four key questions:

1. How are tropes of madness constructed in post-Yugoslav cinemas through narrative and audio-visual aesthetics?
2. How do these tropes function in terms of articulating themes of trauma and identity in the post-Yugoslav cultural context?
3. How does analysis of tropes of madness facilitate a comparative consideration across the post-Yugoslav cinemas and what does it add to understandings of how cultures in individual successor states processed experiences of the period?
4. How can this case study contribute to literature on cultural uses and representations of madness more generally?

In order to answer these key questions, I conceptualise cinema as a public sphere which engages various contemporaneous discourses around the break-up of Yugoslavia and its consequences in the successor societies, ultimately employing the imaginary for the purposes of thinking about the traumas of the break-up, difficulties of transition and prevailing identity discourses in the post-Yugoslav national contexts. In order to identify

what defines tropes of madness at a textual level, I make use of the semantic/syntactic approach to genre as a way of highlighting commonalities across multiple texts – before then elaborating on how individual uses of such tropes in each film engage specific local articulations of core themes around trauma and identity. Owing to the space required for outlining these aspects, I have placed the entirety of this discussion in the next chapter devoted to theoretical framework and methodology. The remainder of this introductory chapter will be divided into three parts, encompassing a rationale for the study’s ‘post-Yugoslav’ framework; a literature review of current approaches to madness on screen and existing work on trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cinemas, which aims to locate the original contributions of this study; and finally an overview of the corpus selection and subsequent thesis chapters.

1.2. Rationale for the ‘post-Yugoslav’ framework

The most primary methodological choice that has been made – and which requires some explanation and elaboration – pertains to the use of a ‘post-Yugoslav’ framework for the study. If the films in question were variously produced in Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, or Kosovo⁶ – and often within an international co-production arrangement (sometimes involving partners such as Germany, Bulgaria, or France) – then what is the sense in adopting this ‘catch-all’ umbrella term of ‘post-Yugoslav’? This objection is further validated by Yugoslavia having constituted a federal union of six republics which were neither linguistically nor religiously homogenous – either at the collective level, or sometimes within individual republics themselves (and thus entailed significant internal heterogeneity in terms of cinematic production and cultural activity).⁷ Since some of the films which are to be included within the study were produced as late as 2005 – to what extent is it useful, or even appropriate, to place them under the post-Yugoslav umbrella?

Firstly it should be noted that ‘grouping’ studies which encompass multiple national cinemas are common in the literature on the Yugoslav successor states (Levi (2007),

⁶ N.B. I have used the spelling of ‘Kosovo’ and ‘Kosovan’ throughout the thesis for purposes of consistency with prioritising English language versions of country names for stylistic reasons (e.g. ‘Croatia’ rather than ‘Hrvatska’, ‘Serbia’ as opposed to ‘Srbija’ etc.) – apart from when quoting from the film itself where the Albanian form of ‘Kosova’ is used.

⁷ It should however be noted that this internal heterogeneity was extensively supported by a considerable degree of state and institutional encouragement for translation efforts that enabled cultural flows to circulate throughout the entire SFRY, as elaborated upon extensively in Milutinović (2013) in the work on what he calls the ‘common Yugoslav cultural layer’.

Iordanova (2001), Goulding (2003)). Equally evident are more regional approaches which focus on larger groupings around the Balkans (Iordanova (2005)) or even Eastern Europe (Mazierska (2010)). Although some scholars have argued that such grouping practices can deny cultural autonomy to newly independent nation-states of former Yugoslavia (Hirschfeld (2011)), it seems instead more prudent to assess the merits of such methodologies on a case-by-case basis rather than necessarily defaulting to either an ‘individual national cinema’ study or a ‘regional’ study.

In terms of studying films directly concerned with Yugoslav break-up and its aftermath, the case for this comparative ‘grouping’ approach is all the stronger for both textual and industrial reasons. The single most pressing rationale for adopting the post-Yugoslav framework is that many of the films produced within the independent successor states contain an overriding thematic focus with themes of the shared Yugoslav past, traumatic experiences of Yugoslav break-up, and challenges for future development in the societies in question (which again display an extensive degree of overlap whether in terms of dealing with legacies of conflict or managing processes of EU integration). For these films produced during and just after the break-up – which are thematically concerned with it and from which the thesis corpus is drawn – the comparative post-Yugoslav grouping is therefore the obvious logical choice if we wish to more comprehensively map how the demise of the SFRY has been understood in these visual cultures⁸ and how it continues to inform thinking about the present in successor societies.⁹

Furthermore, if we amalgamate all of the specific historical ties in play with the successor states (Serbia and Macedonia share a predominantly Orthodox Christian religious orientation while Croatia and Slovenia a Catholic one – and yet Serbia and Croatia share

⁸ In reference to conceptualising post-Yugoslav cultures in the plural, according to the emergence of multiple successor states during the period of the 1990s; it is vital to stress that neither a singular, post-Yugoslav film ‘culture’ nor the plural ‘cultures’ favoured here is ultimately satisfactory. In the final analysis, the plural ‘cultures’ has a propensity to imply a lower level of thematic or industrial (particularly audience-related) overlap across the multiple film cultures in question – while the singular ‘culture’ masks the massive divergences that were even more in evidence during the period. A choice must however be made and for this reason I have chosen to refer to multiple cultures, considering this to be perhaps the less inaccurate term – with further care taken to stress inter-sections and overlaps where relevant so as to avoid the impression of hermetically sealed and entirely separate successor visual cultures.

⁹ It should however be noted that the films selected for the thesis are not ones produced by state-funded ministries for culture with close ties to contemporaneous political establishments – in short, as will become evident throughout the analysis chapters, these films are not to be considered as extensions of state power within the cultural sphere. Therefore, in terms of the comparative aspect of the analysis, the thesis is concerned with titles which come from a fledgling independent film industry and in which the ideological stance towards ruling elites is not pre-figured either by their funding arrangements or director’s ethnic backgrounds.

greater linguistic commonality) including legacies of recent conflict, it can also be argued that these cultures are clearly ‘neighbours’ in much more than just a geographical sense. Indeed, since the various conflicts of the Yugoslav break-up (and many of the most shocking instances of brutality and violence) were specifically manifested along ethnic lines¹⁰ it should not be surprising that ethnic others have continued to be highly present within the cinemas of the successor states – particularly when handling themes of the break-up. Therefore, since neighbours (‘others’ of various kinds) often feature prominently in cultures which frequently address questions of self-definition and identity and the aforementioned specifics of the post-Yugoslav cases, it should be no surprise that Bosnians often feature in Serbian films (as on-screen characters or through dialogic exposition), just as Serbs feature in Croatian films – and so on. This is another thematic element of culture within former Yugoslav successor states, which the post-Yugoslav grouping makes evident – and which is to be considered within the context of the tropes of madness in question here.

From an industrial perspective the industries of the successor states continue to display a high level of overlap (increasing with each year since the conflicts) in terms of personnel, co-production arrangements, and – most importantly for this study – audiences. This is pertinent in the post-Yugoslav case where successor cinemas can be classed as ‘small cinemas’ according to the definitions of Hjort and Petrie (2007). One of the consequences of this is what Hjort and Petrie term the ‘inward/outward impulse’ whereby small industries (such as many of those in former Eastern Europe) have a strong interest in making films about matters of national identity and history (in part arising from the ‘post-colonial’ aspect of their current independence) – at a time when their domestic markets are smaller than ever before due to fragmentation of larger political entities into relatively small nation-state formations. Consequently, even films with the most domestic of themes are often produced within international co-productions and with export markets also in mind. Most of the films in question within this thesis are therefore made with three audiences in mind, domestic; regional; and, if adequate distribution can be secured, international.

¹⁰ A particularly resonant example of this can be seen in the case of the Srebrenica massacre of July 1995, in which 8,000 Bosniak men and boys were executed at the hands of Ratko Mladić’s Army of Republika Srpska comprised of Serb soldiers, paramilitaries and volunteers from other Orthodox countries including Greece and Russia.

Having selected the post-Yugoslav framework for the study, it is worth elaborating more precisely what is meant by it within the context of this study. The term is, at the most literal level, one indicating the historical period after which Yugoslavia no longer existed as a political entity. Despite the fact that ‘Yugoslavia’ persisted within the naming of the smaller federal union of Serbia and Montenegro that remained united after the initial wars of the early 1990s, I will be taking ‘post-Yugoslav’ – in the temporal sense – to refer to the years of 1991 and after, for the reason that this year marked the outbreak of the first open conflict and official secession of republics of Slovenia and Croatia from the federal union. In other words, the first months of 1991 were the last time that Yugoslavia existed in a form at least superficially similar to that of the 45-year-old post-WWII state. In terms of the years of the break-up, I employ a wider timescale than is sometimes used in including also declarations of independence of both Montenegro in 2006 and Kosovo in 2008 as constituting latter stages of the same processes which began with conflict in the early 1990s. The time-frame for the study is therefore the wider window of 1991-2008 rather than only the years of initial conflict from 1991-1995.

Additionally, ‘post-Yugoslav’ refers to a period of varying duration in which the successor republics underwent the sort of ‘transitional’ changes experienced throughout much of the rest of post-communist Europe. This generally involved a move towards parliamentary democracy, economic reform tending towards free market capitalism, liberalisation of the media and establishment of a larger civil society. However, again the danger of simplifying generalisation is present, insofar as we should remember that such processes were far from concurrent through the former Yugoslav republics (something many scholars actually identify as a key factor in causing open conflict – see Ramet, 2005). A pertinent example can be seen with the transition to parliamentary democracy which arguably took place in Slovenia an entire decade before it did in Serbia. So, while the use of the ‘post-Yugoslav’ umbrella, as a descriptor of the types of change undergone by the former republics, might imply more coordinated simultaneity than is appropriate – it does also serve to indicate that ultimately the societies in question have followed a broadly similar development in the two decades since the dissolution of the SFRY.

Unlike in countries like Poland and Hungary for example, which also experienced a similar post-socialist trajectory in terms of the direction of political and economic development, the former Yugoslav transition also entailed bloody armed conflicts –

therefore creating a further legacy of the period which is not relevant elsewhere (excluding perhaps some limited fighting in Moldova over the breakaway province of Transdnistria). With increasingly divergent visions for the future emerging across the different federal republics towards the end of the 1980s, exacerbated by economic crisis and the waning power of Yugoslavism as a unifying ideology after post-WWII President Tito's death in 1980; Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from the SFRY in 1991. The move was largely motivated by disagreements with the largest political entity in the federation, Serbia, and in particular Serb president Slobodan Milošević's exploitation and corruption of Yugoslavism as a veil for his own aggressive Serb nationalism which, following a series of alarming interventions in turbulent Kosovo in the late 1980s, seemed ideologically incompatible with maintaining each republic's own autonomy within the union. Ultimately the secessions of 1991 triggered armed conflict, lasting only a few days in Slovenia but for almost 4 years, on and off, in Croatia owing to the greater level of ethnic diversity across its territory, then largely comprised of a majority of historically Catholic Croats, a sizable Orthodox Serb minority and also some Bosniak Muslims. Likewise, Bosnia, the most ethnically-mixed of the former republics saw the most intense fighting again along similar ethnic lines. Although these wars ended in 1995 with the Dayton agreement, fighting continued throughout the late 1990s in the then Serb province of Kosovo where a large Kosovo-Albanian majority sought independence from the union with Serbia, resisted with extensive armed force by Milošević – ultimately culminating in a NATO bombing campaign in 1999, after which the province became a UN administered region until its formal (and not yet fully internationally recognised) declaration of independence in 2008.¹¹ All in all, the various episodes of conflict resulted in approximately 200,000 deaths – many of which were civilian owing to the use of ethnic cleansing as war strategy aimed at reducing opponents' claims to territory – and 4 million displacements according to latest ICTY figures.¹² The post-war challenges and problems included everything from the more obvious traumas arising from violence, fighting, and destruction of infrastructure, right through to the acute 'brain drain' whereby significant

¹¹ Montenegro, traditionally allied – due to a shared Orthodox heritage – with Serbia throughout the conflicts of the 1990s, exited the federal union in 2006 with a declaration of independence following an uncontested referendum. Macedonia likewise largely escaped conflict over its own declaration of independence in 1991, although it was significantly affected by the later Kosovan conflicts in the late 1990s with large numbers of refugees increasing the large Albanian minority living in the border regions.

¹² See <http://ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-FormerYugoslavia-Justice-Facts-2009-English.pdf> for the latest ICTY fact sheets.

numbers of highly skilled workers left their countries for stability and security abroad. Again, this problem was unevenly felt throughout the successor republics, but it nonetheless constituted an important feature of the post-Yugoslav experience and its film cultures' thematic concerns which was less evident in many other post-communist states.¹³

Moreover, just as with terms like 'post-socialism', 'post-Yugoslav' also entails an ideological component which accompanies the more tangible ones of economic or political transformation. If post-communism marks the end of ideological alternatives to capitalism – felt not just in former 'bloc' states like Poland or Romania, but equally throughout the rest of the world as many scholars argue (see Kristensen, 2012), then we might note that 'post-Yugoslav', while entailing this common element, also refers to the condition arising in the wake of the ideological demise of the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural federal state. In other words, just as for many commentators, post-communism is a global condition describing the absence of an ideological counterpoint or alternative to free market capitalism, so too post-Yugoslav can be described as entailing the ideological fallout of the failure of the most multi-cultural of communist experiments – and of the so-called 'third way'.¹⁴ This logic is further evidenced by the later secession of Montenegro from the federal union with Serbia in 2006 and the still-contested status of the province of Kosovo which, in 2008, also declared independence. The only remaining political bond which still officially persists from the Yugoslav era is that between the other semi-autonomous province of Vojvodina with the larger republic within which it is located, Serbia (there too separatist political parties do exist and enjoy some popular support, although a conflict of secession is extremely unlikely).

'Post-Yugoslav' means then, not only the period following the break-up of the SFRY but also, both the political and economic situation arising from this break-up – and the ideological state engendered by the end of Yugoslav-ism at least on an official level.

¹³ It was not until later enlargements of the EU included formerly Eastern bloc countries, in 2004 especially, that this dynamic of significant outward migration became a more general feature across most of Eastern Europe – although the levels of permanent and long-term migration are currently far lower in the cases of these countries, such as Poland, when compared with former Yugoslav ones.

¹⁴ The Yugoslav 'third way' encompassed a variety of ideological principles, including the definitive self-management component of Yugoslav socialism, which deviated from principles in evidence on either side of the East-West Cold War divide. Yugoslavia's demise therefore also entailed the effective collapse of affiliated organisations such as the 'non-aligned movement', integral to the practice of a 'third way' politics in foreign policy. The latter movement for example was one spearheaded by Yugoslavia as a means of navigating the Cold War divide between East and West: although still formally in existence – it does not now enjoy the same degree of international relevance and significance in terms of the global political landscape as it previously did.

Hence, post-Yugoslav as a term is intended as shorthand for a tangible everyday experience of political and economic change and cultural activity which acts in and around these transitional contexts. But it also indicates a period of ideological turmoil, not just arising from the demise of socialism, but also of the emphatic ultimate failure of Yugoslavism as an agent of social cohesion, co-operation, prosperity and stability in the region. The cinematic culture of Serbia circa 2004 for example is therefore crucially both post-socialist – and post-Yugoslav. Moreover, both terms reference not only top-down political and economic change but also a more elusive phenomenon arising from the traumas of ideological uncertainty and appearance of a vacuum in which competing ideologies attempt to establish dominance in a fledgling pluralistic system. Experiences of such societal transformation entail a key thematic preoccupation of culture in post-Yugoslav cinemas. To conclude, all of the above factors are, in some configuration, active within the cultures of former Yugoslav countries and the unevenness of their distribution (i.e. the fact that by these definitions, some countries are arguably more post-Yugoslav than others) is a fruitful matter for further consideration rather than a reason for invalidating the discussion. The ‘post-Yugoslav’ aspect of these cultures (cinematic or otherwise) is therefore both industrial – *and* thematic, although it is the latter aspect to which this textual study will be devoted.

1.3. Research contexts

1.3.1. Studying madness on screen

The thesis aims to contribute to presently available literature in two broad areas. The first of these is scholarship on post-Yugoslav film culture and its address of trauma and identity relative to socio-political changes entailed by Yugoslav break-up, violent conflict, and subsequent challenges. Secondly, since the thesis studies madness in a specific cultural context, it could also be considered as a case study in the field of cultural histories of madness. Across these two areas, four particular contributions will be specified in this section pertaining in turn to general approaches to madness in cinema; literature on post-Yugoslav cinematic engagements with Yugoslav break-up; representations of PTSD in post-Yugoslav cinemas; and intersections between emergent post-Yugoslav identity discourses and cinemas.

It is important to note that few studies of images of madness in (any) cinema are currently available despite the fact that such films are part of a global tradition which goes all the way back to the silent era. As a result, what little there is of such work is rather fragmented – while a short chapter or book section might be devoted to a film or two which contain images of madness, this is always within the context of a study which adopts a different organising principle (the oeuvre of particular director or output of a specific industry for example). This seems quite likely to be a consequence of the fact that, as madness poses so many interpretive challenges it is difficult to conceive of approaches in which it can provide the central organising principle of a study. As noted by Williams (1981: 63), ‘films about madness have never constituted a genre in their own right. They have more often borrowed from other genres and modes’ giving us one explanation for why stock film methodologies came unstuck when faced with the challenge of analysing madness. Likewise, trans-cultural or trans-historical approaches to madness are inherently challenging owing to the aforementioned variability of conceptions of madness in differing historical periods and cultural formations, presenting further problems. Ultimately though, the result is that madness in cinema has somewhat fallen through the cracks with few studies available that take it as a primary focus. Of the works that do give primary attention to madness, most do so within a framework of looking at films *about* madness – although even with this stipulation, establishing a relevant corpus of films entails some difficult questions. I argue that these questions are largely approachable in two ways. Below I will outline these two different ways of approaching films ‘of madness’, starting with the one currently more prominent in film and media studies, which looks at madness as a primary thematic textual concern. The second approach summarised after (and the one more relevant to this study), involves a focus on madness as a metaphoric facilitator of engagement with various other, often broader, thematic concerns.

Currently, the former is the more prominent approach to madness on screen, which has resulted in certain films (and types of film) receiving disproportionate attention to others. Because a key factor in improving the quality of life for people suffering from mental illness in developed societies is the removal of stigmas surrounding such conditions, recent years have seen a number of studies which look at representations of madness in various popular media in the UK – from tabloid press (Cross, 2010 and Wahl, 1995) to film and television (Harper, 2009 and Philo, 1996). Meanwhile, studies such as Gabbard and

Gabbard (1999) and Fleming and Manvell (1986) provide historical overviews of how representations of mental illness have changed over time in American cinemas. Such literature attempts to understand how common social attitudes towards sufferers of mental illness are defined in popular culture with a view to advancing the level of public knowledge so that those who experience mental illness receive greater support (especially examples such as Morris, 2006 – written specifically for health professionals). The higher aim is to contribute towards an improvement in the mental health of societies by raising awareness of why stigmas exist around mental health, how they operate, their consequences, and how we might move beyond them.

This is, of course, very essential work and represents an example of media studies applied to the goal of transforming media cultures in a way that impacts positively upon the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of a society. However, because of this underlying motivation, such studies tend to focus only on certain kinds of images of madness. In the case of fictional feature film, this means that certain examples are naturally more relevant to the discussion than others. Usually these are narratives which depict sufferers of mental illness as protagonists rather than supporting characters and utilise their structure to focus on the daily experiences of those living with such illnesses. Often such films will feature a character with a specific condition (named either in the film or in surrounding para-textual materials), portrayed in a realist manner informed by present medical discourse on it, and an effort will be made to situate the spectators in a position of empathy with this ill protagonist. High-profile examples of films which fall into this category are *A Beautiful Mind* (Howard, 2001), which also combined elements of the biopic drama in order to portray the life of US mathematician, John Nash, who suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, or *Girl Interrupted* (Mangold, 1999), which is an adaptation of an autobiographical account of life in a mental institution by a former patient in the US. These films contain what I would describe as *representations* of madness or, as seems more appropriate owing to their claim to medical authenticity, representations of mental illness. These films purport to a realistic depiction of the subjective experience of sufferers *and* also focus the majority of the film's narrative and images towards this end – ultimately participating in a discourse on what various mental disorders are and how sufferers should be treated and thought of.

There are however plenty of other films, which feature asylum or mental hospital settings and characters who experience some form of mental disruption, but which do not expend the majority of the narrative on creating a realistic depiction of their subjective experience. Here madness is both present and highly visible – but it is not the focus of the film’s meaning-making structures. In other words, these films do not offer so much representations of mental illness which aim to create knowledge about it, but instead feature the use of madness as metaphor for the exploration of a range of other wider themes. The reason for this second type of metaphoric usage is well summarised in the works of Scull (2011) and Sontag (1983):

Let us begin, then, with the recognition that madness – massive and lasting disturbances of behaviour, emotion, and intellect – resonates powerfully in our collective consciousness. Lunacy, insanity, psychosis, mental illness – whatever term we prefer, its referents are disturbances of reason, the passions, and human action that frighten, create chaos, and yet sometimes amuse; that mark a gulf between the commonsense reality most of us embrace, and the discordant version some humans appear to experience. (2011: 2-3)

Any important disease whose causality is murky tends to be awash with significance. (1983: 59)

As Sontag outlines, the metaphors attached to certain illnesses (TB and cancer are the primary concerns of her study, although she also briefly discusses mental illness) spring from both fear of the illness’s power to affect the sufferer’s life – and the relative lack of understanding which surrounds its causes, workings and treatments. Madness, lunacy or mental illness has always fulfilled both of these criteria (although one goal of modern discourses on mental illness is the removal of fear and stigma arising from ignorance) and have thus also become ‘awash with significance’ over time. It is precisely this which accounts for the ‘powerful resonance’ that Scull refers to above, contributing to the fascination that madness exerts over the arts and culture – and it is in this that it massively differs from many other, more clearly understood, illnesses or physical malfunctions that can afflict human beings and equally constitute a component of our experience. While the objective of Sontag’s study is to explicate how these metaphoric usages impact upon attitudes to the ill, the focus of this study is to explore how images of madness in post-

Yugoslav cinematic cultures contribute towards thinking and understanding about various experiences of the 1990s and 2000s.

There is, therefore, a functional distinction to be drawn between a representational use of madness and a metaphoric one, which also happens to reflect the current imbalance in scholarship available (with the former category attracting the majority of attention in academic literature). This second category tends to encompass a potentially much wider range of films in that they are ones which are only partially ‘about madness’ and would perhaps be better described as ones featuring madness – but being about other things. Currently, there are only a few studies of madness on screen which focus on such metaphoric usages of such images – rather than those which directly participate in discourses around specific mental illnesses. An important consideration with regard to this second category relates to whether or not we include only films in which madness is invoked on a textual level (a list of such titles can be found in Wahl 1995: 169 for example) or also admit more ambiguous ones where a viewer or scholar introduces madness within an interpretive analysis – something inherently open-ended due to the highly ‘loaded’ and over-determined nature of madness (Garber: 2010).

In any case, the literature focusing on more metaphorical uses of madness (whether textually or critically invoked) is currently rather scant, encompassing mainly short and sporadic pieces in relation to individual films across certain film cultures. Two short articles by McMahon (2010, 2011) and the excellent study of the asylum in American cinema by Horne (2009) in an MA dissertation are concerned predominantly with Hollywood cinemas. Outside of the Hollywood context, only works such as Kaye (2007), working with 1970s-1980s Canadian cinema and notions of national identity, and Hunter (1998), looking at underground and extreme Japanese cinema, provide examples of how studies of madness on screen can be employed to discern a culture’s way of thinking about various forms of crisis and taboo – beyond reflecting attitudes towards mental health or the medical profession. Historically, similar approaches can also be seen with regard to milestone American films of the 1960s and 1970s counterculture largely examining the work of directors such as Alfred Hitchcock and films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (Forman, 1975) relative to schizophrenia and the valorisation of madness following the work of ‘anti-psychiatrists’ such as Michel Foucault and R.D. Laing (see chapter 3 for more). A further metaphoric use of madness in cinema is evident in the vast array of films

utilising it as a means of exploring traumatic experience. It is perhaps in this capacity that madness has been most frequently present within studies of global cinemas, starting with the aforementioned *A Page of Madness* often interpreted as engaging traumas of Japan's twentieth-century modernity (see Peterson (1989) and Gardner (2004) as examples). Williams (1981) and Mazierska (2004) on the other hand provide examples of madness invoked in relation to experiences of social alienation within the context of Polish directors, Roman Polanski and Marek Kotorski respectively. However, on the whole approaches to madness in cinema are generally rare in the literature on any global cinema. Moreover, they are currently completely absent from that on post-Yugoslav cinemas, where a number of films were produced between 1994-2006 which offered audiences tropes of madness as a metaphoric framework for conceptualising aspects of the break-up as well as some that adopted a more representational approach, ultimately towards the same ends, by focusing on the specific condition of post-traumatic stress disorder. Despite the emergence of these films of madness as a new dimension of post-Yugoslav film cultures however, they have thus far not been attended to in current literature – perhaps owing to the fact that they are only visible as a collective phenomenon if a transnational approach is adopted spanning multiple post-Yugoslav cinemas.

The broadest of the four main contributions of the thesis is to offer a study of images of madness with a wider remit than those including only films that participate in discourses around particular illnesses or the treatment of patients. This study proposes also to include films in which madness is used as a 'trope' (a key term hereafter which will be defined in detail in chapter 2) – creating meaning around a variety of other themes in the post-Yugoslav context. It is therefore one of only a few studies which looks at madness in cinema from this perspective and begins to more comprehensively answer what the cultural significance of images of madness could be – beyond only impacting upon preconceptions around certain illnesses or the treatment of patients.

1.3.2. Current thinking around madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas: The 'wild Balkan man'

The only existing discussions of madness in current scholarship on post-Yugoslav cultures and cinemas are derived from studies of Balkanism (Todorova, 1997) that have emerged as a consequence of the plethora of representations of the region that were produced in various media during the 1990s both inside and outside former Yugoslavia

when the conflicts generated extensive international attention. A large proportion of these representations were subsequently shown to employ a framework for representing Balkan identity which characterised it as one of primitivism and brutality in opposition to a civilised Western other (Hammond, 2005). Todorova has shown that such representational schema have historical precedents that go back far beyond the break-up of Yugoslavia, while numerous subsequent works examined how such epistemological parameters were intensely revived as an explanatory framework for the various episodes of violent ethno-national conflict during the 1990s. Kuusisto (2004) has for example focused on the study of Balkanist discourse in the official statements of NATO and Western political leaders in responding to the crisis while Bjelić and Savić (2005) have sought to collate an in-depth study of the ideological dimensions evident in contemporaneous discourse on the region during this period – including self/other representations in contemporary post-Yugoslav cinemas. Ultimately in most cases, the definitive characteristics of a Balkanist discourse entails the construction of the region's inhabitants as being physically human but fundamentally 'other' on a mental level by virtue of exhibiting behaviour which is attributed to inherent geo-culturally induced irrationality, unbridled and animalistic passions, and primitivism. Although not always invoked using a direct terminology of madness, this representational paradigm nonetheless entailed its characteristic effect of mental 'othering' in the attempt to explain a complex but shocking series of conflicts.

This invocation of a fundamental but unknowable mental difference moved those captured within its parameters backwards along human evolutionary development, closer to realm of animals.¹⁵ In this respect, the tropes of madness invoked in relation to 'Balkan' identity in official international discourses intersected with a conception of madness evident in post-Yugoslav cinemas of the 1990s and the representational strategy which Jameson (2004) has termed the trope of 'the wild Balkan man' (WBM). Jameson's term is now a relatively established shorthand for summarising some of the most consistent aesthetic, thematic, and narrative features of films produced in the contexts of Yugoslav break-up and the years immediately after. Originally coined in the above-mentioned essay 'Thoughts on Balkan Cinema', the defining feature of the trope is, as the naming implies, a focus on an extreme incarnation of the uncivilised masculinity which has formed a

¹⁵ In this respect it is interesting to note a political cartoon referenced by Crnković (2012: 9), in which Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia are depicted as unapacifiable dogs snapping at the heels of a well dressed gentleman labelled 'EC' (European Community).

component of regional identity stereotypes in various discourses throughout the 20th century, but especially during the 1990s within explanations for the wars that raged in much of former Yugoslavia.

Since this period also coincides with the greatest level of international exposure ever experienced by the cinemas in question *and* the collapse of internal sources of funding, causing filmmakers to look abroad – it is not surprising that this ‘wild Balkan man’ trope¹⁶ also often references processes of national and ethnic identity commodification and export, constructions of otherness within global media circulation relative to international economic or military hierarchies, and the ideological function of the gaze. Jameson’s initial description of the trope offers as one of the core characteristics that it incorporates within the text the powerful gaze of a Western other, for whom various types of performance are staged. Longinović (2005) has summarised it thus:

Since the wars of Yugoslav succession (1991-95), the national cinema financing had collapsed, forcing most of the cinematographers to seek financing abroad, counting on the visibility potential of the conflict to secure foreign financing for their films...

One of the most effective strategies for overcoming the domination/submission dichotomy [i.e. Hollywood’s global monopoly] in the global theatre has been the incorporation of the dominant view, or what I metaphorically designate the ‘Western eye’ into the poetic texture of cinematic performances... (2005: 37).

Thus, critics such as Bjelić (2005) and Longinović have correlated the use of the ‘wild Balkan man’ trope from within post-Yugoslav cinematic culture as a consequence of the internalisation of the powerful Balkanist rhetoric circulating at an international level during the Yugoslav break-up in the 1990s – encouraged, in large part, by the changing dynamics of funding and implications for subsequent exhibition. In addition to the use of the identity stereotypes already discussed, these films incorporated what Longinović calls ‘the Western eye’ – cinematic devices for thematising issues arising from the global contexts of Yugoslav break-up within which these films were produced:

¹⁶ It is important to distinguish between Jameson’s use of the word trope – functioning in a largely metonymic capacity to indicate representations drawn from pervasive stereotypes – and the use of the term throughout my own analysis, which looks at a more metaphoric usage (outlined in more detail in the next chapter covering theoretical frameworks).

...These films are symptoms of an internalised culture of ‘self-balkanisation’ articulated by auteurs as a response both to the exclusion of their native locations from the Western vision of civilisation and an implicit critique of the domestic glorifications of righteous uses of violence. The experience of being watched by the West has reduced the repertoire of available masculine images worthy of being played back to its distant visual source. Characterised by the hopeless repetition of masculine stereotypes, these films represent the post-Yugoslav space as a zone where distortions of extreme passions strive to satisfy the imaginary demand for violence coming from the Western eye. (2005: 46)

It is common therefore for films which have been discussed within the context of this trope to contain an engagement with the ethics and power dynamics of looking at/watching others – as well as consideration of how these acts of watching/being watched impact upon notions of individual and collective identity. The Macedonian *Before the Rain* (Mančevski, 1994) involves the story of a wartime photographer haunted by the scenes which he has witnessed and photographed; *Cabaret Balkan* (Paskaljević, 1999), a Serbian production, opens with a cabaret performance in which an eccentric master of ceremonies directly addresses the camera with a challenge to the viewer to explain and justify why they are watching; *Wounds* (Dragojević, 1998), also Serbian, focuses upon a pair of urban sociopathic killers who become an object of media fascination to the extent that it is not easy to demarcate who is sustaining who in ever escalating cycle of violence and voyeurism. It is the inclusion of this ‘Western eye’ as a textual feature that enables the actions of local protagonists depicted in the films to be identified as a deviation from various civilised norms shown to originate and reside in different (Western) spaces and cultural formations. The process of observation by (and performance for) the ‘Western eye’ in the trope of the wild Balkan man is thus precisely one which invokes the general conceptualisation madness discussed earlier – relying as it does upon a perceived deviation from certain discursively maintained norms.

The ideological consequences of such tropes were however more difficult to pinpoint and the range of interpretation varied from the conclusions of Longinović above, who sees in it mainly a hopeless and submissive occupation of the only space reserved for post-Yugoslav cultures on an international level – that of self-representation as bloodthirsty barbarians – as a condition of survival in a global marketplace (i.e. securing continued access to film financing). On the other hand, Jameson and Bjelić both suggest (the latter especially) that the technique could also be understood as a reclaiming of agency, by

attempting subversion of the internationally dominant trope. In this sense it would be akin to the entry of the n-word in Black American English – a reluctant acceptance of the dominating representational parameters imposed by a more powerful culture – but also an attempt to then engage, reclaim, and reconfigure from within.¹⁷ In any case, the consequences of these aforementioned ideological factors on the aesthetics of such films were noticeable. In reviews and marketing campaigns they were often characterised by their ‘energy’¹⁸ – most likely a reference to the common use of diegetic music and the fact that narrative action is usually driven by chance and coincidence rather than protagonists’ goal-orientated actions. Instead, in films of the wild Balkan man, the progression of events is rarely foreseeable, with action largely resulting from a clash between a ‘carnavalesque’ violation of various social norms by characters pursuing uninhibited pleasure in both private and public spheres – and of larger historical or metaphysical forces to which their lives are exposed.

It is worth expounding on this trope of the wild Balkan man at length because it does provide an example of an influential debate within studies of post-Yugoslav cinemas which essentially focuses upon unravelling the ideological dimensions of a set of recurrent textual features evident within a number of films – brought together under the umbrella term of the ‘trope of the wild Balkan man’. Moreover, this trope is one to which certain constructions of madness (here centred upon the invocation of limits between civilisation and barbarity/primitivism) become absolutely central in understanding how post-Yugoslav cinemas have responded to the traumas of the period and, secondly, subsequent notions around identity arising from such representations. However, the problem with existing studies of the ‘wild Balkan man’ is that they come to represent the dominant cinematic mode of engagement with Yugoslav break-up in almost all literature on the topic. This is evident in the consensus which emerges reading the most high profile scholarship from aforementioned writers such as Jameson (2004), Longinović (2004) and Pavičić (2010) who all characterise the predominant ideological cinematic practice as being one of ‘self-balkanisation’ – particularly during the 1990s.¹⁹ While this scholarship correctly attends to

¹⁷ See Kennedy (2003) for more on this.

¹⁸ The UK Artificial Eye DVD release of *Life is a Miracle*, for example, includes review quotes which emphasise the film’s ‘energetic’ and ‘rowdy’ nature.

¹⁹ Pavičić (2010) also updates his study to include a latter period when the ‘cinema of normalisation’ emerges in which, in response to significant political changes in Bosnia, Serbia and Croatia towards the end of the 1990s, cinematic discourse on identity responds to the new emphasis on moving away from being the ‘Balkan other’ inherently alien to Western Europe and the EU – and instead towards inclusion in precisely

many of the most internationally prominent films emerging from former Yugoslav cinemas during the period (such as those of Emir Kusturica, Milčo Mančevski's *Before the Rain* etc.) it is largely based upon one corpus of films, all exhibiting certain textual similarities at levels of narrative and audio-visual aesthetics. I intend to demonstrate through the following chapters that there are numerous other contemporaneous films that employ tropes of madness in a differing capacity (i.e. not primarily as a negotiation of the limits of civilisation/barbarity), all of which ultimately evidence a wider range of engagements with the contexts of conflict, Yugoslav break-up, ideological collapse, and 'transition' in all its guises. These films are equally concerned with the core thematic preoccupations of trauma and identity but since their textual dimensions differ from those of the archetypal 'wild Balkan man' films, they have thus far been little studied. Some of the films in question have so far received no attention in academic literature (*Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005), *Burlesque Tragedy* (Marković, 1995), *Mirage* (Ristovski, 2004), *Loving Glances* (Karanović, 2003), *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003)) while others have been the subject of at most one or two short articles (*Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 2000), *Marshall Tito's Spirit* (Brešan, 1999)).²⁰

The second contribution of this study is therefore to expand on understanding of the range of responses to Yugoslav break-up evident in post-Yugoslav cinemas, building on the existing scholarship on the trope of the 'wild Balkan man' by examining an alternate corpus of films. This alternate corpus – equally focuses on core cultural questions of how to interpret traumatic legacies and establish new frameworks for understanding self and other in a drastically reconfigured socio-political landscape – but with differing strategies, and ideological implications, for doing so to the films of the 'wild Balkan man'.

1.3.3. Trauma and PTSD in post-Yugoslav cinemas

By way of concluding the review of existing literature, I intend to situate the following study relative to others focusing on trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cinemas. With regard to trauma studies, it is worth highlighting that although some studies of post-Yugoslav cinemas do contain discussion of how traumatic experiences and controversial histories of conflict are treated in film, there is actually no specific study of

this entity, on both a political and cultural level. This is then manifested cinematically in an increased focus on everyday urban settings (which exclude any prospect of Balkan exoticism) and problem solving protagonists who take control of their lives rather than having events dictated by fate or chance.

²⁰ Existing literature will be introduced within the individual chapters preceding the film analysis sections.

how post-traumatic stress disorder has been represented in the film culture of the period – a surprising omission considering not only the number of military casualties from the conflicts, but also the extensive suffering of civilian populations either through living proximately to frontlines, volunteering or being drafted to fight, wartime rapes, internal or international displacement etc.

Interestingly there is an odd imbalance in existing scholarship from other disciplines too (anthropology, social sciences, etc.) on the subjective experience of trauma and shock in Yugoslavia, in that perhaps more work has been done outside of the former Yugoslav societies (working with refugees or migrants originally from Yugoslavia) than with those who remained in the successor states. Bauer et al. (2011), Lersner et al. (2008), Djuretić et al. (2007) provide examples of such studies, while Agger and Jensen (1996) and Gavrilović et al. (2002) are two of the few that worked within the post-Yugoslav context itself. In film studies too, to date there is not yet a comprehensive survey of representations of PTSD in various post-Yugoslav media, something perhaps attributable to the continuing lack of recognition of wartime related PTSD in some successor states with attendant disputes over compensation and legal status still unresolved.²¹

Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, the only film which has thus far attracted a notable discussion on the topic has been *Grbavica* (Žbanić, 2006) depicting the life of a mother living in post-war Sarajevo and struggling to cope with the stress induced by her war-time rape at the hands of Serb soldiers while held in a concentration camp.²² Article length studies by Mandušić (2012), Koebel (2009) and Gold (2010) all offer close readings of the film's visual style from the perspective of representations of PTSD therein. Likewise, the two most comprehensive book-length studies of post-Yugoslav cinemas, Iordanova (2001) and Levi (2007), contain relevant discussion of trauma and PTSD focusing on the question of war veterans in Levi (2007: 117) and civilian witnesses and concentration camp prisoners in Iordanova (2001: 188-194). These studies summarise the most common perspectives on the theme evident in the texts in question although, having a much broader remit than solely looking at PTSD, they stop short of providing in-depth textual analysis of individual films' translation of trauma into the audio-visual medium. There is therefore

²¹ There is some more detailed discussion of this in the second thesis section.

²² It should be noted that there are other films on precisely this same topic of war-time rapes and PTSD in the women who survived – such as *As if I am not there* (Wilson, 2009) – but thus far Jasmila Žbanić's Golden Bear winning film has been the only one to achieve significant international acclaim and consequently some attention in academic scholarship.

something of a curious absence in currently available literature on PTSD in post-Yugoslav cultures, especially when one considers the high prominence that conceptions of trauma and PTSD occupy in most recent writing on the subjective experience of conflict and abrupt societal transformation (see Bracken and Petty, 1998 or van der Kolk et al., 1996 as examples).

Moreover, within the context of other national cinemas, numerous studies have approached the years following traumatic crises with a view to examining the role that culture plays in processing the implications and meanings of such events. Whether in the context of Chinese cinema (Berry, 2008), Weimar German cinema (Kaes, 2009), or American and British cinemas (Lowenstein, 2005 and Blake, 2008), recent years have seen a huge expansion in the crossover between trauma studies and film studies. As Kaplan and Wang (2004) demonstrate, the scope for extending such studies into almost any global cinema is extensive – which ultimately only further highlights the current lack of a comprehensive review of post-Yugoslav cinemas from the perspective of trauma studies aside from the single work of Iordanova (2001) which accounts definitively for numerous titles and trends produced during the 1990s prior to the work's publication. Beyond the few above-mentioned works however, there still remain a huge volume of images focused on processing the traumas of the break-up and its consequences which are currently unattended to in the literature on the topic.

Thus while it is not the primary aim of this study to remedy the absence of a comprehensive survey of representations of PTSD in post-Yugoslav media, the discussion of tropes of madness will touch upon these aspects and contribute a further piecemeal fragment of this overall missing literature, covering at least those films in which madness informs the representations of PTSD.²³ The third contribution of the study is thereby, using the discussion of tropes of madness, to address to some extent this general absence of literature on trauma and PTSD in post-Yugoslav cultures.

1.3.4. Nation-building and national identity in post-Yugoslav cultures and cinemas

Finally, the last main contribution of the study will be situated relative to post-Yugoslav nation-building in the successor states and the ways in which the cultural sphere

²³ Studies focusing on film cultures in other socio-historical circumstances such as Kaes's study of Weimar cinema (2009) have indicated the viability of considering images of madness in precisely this manner.

– cinema in particular – has functioned as a space facilitating a variety of engagements with discourses around new models of collective identity following the break-up. This focus of the study is very much prompted by the nature of tropes of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas and their thematic usages across the corpus of films for the thesis.

Studies of the politics and societies of post-communist Eastern Europe – and the post-Yugoslav successor states in particular – have often recently worked on the understanding that ‘the most significant principle driving change has been nation-building embedded in ethnic nationalism’ (Korać, 2004). Consequently the conceptual emphasis, within much of the last decade’s scholarship, has shifted away from the narratives and images of disintegration that had proved especially common in the case of Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav studies during, and immediately after, the conflicts of the 1990s. Instead, following Duhaček (2001: 267) who writes that the ‘events in the Balkans over the last decade should be understood first and foremost as those of nation-state formation, rather than disintegration (of Yugoslavia),’ we might now begin to recognise that Yugoslavia’s post-communist legacy is not inherently different in kind to the rest of Eastern Europe (where the nation-building conceptualisation has been more commonly held), though it does involve a number of highly specific individual factors that have contributed to the necessity of maintaining Yugoslavia as a ‘special case’ within most accounts of post-communism (see Holmes, 1997 and Henderson and Robinson, 1997, for example).

Furthermore, though attention to nation-building can be found in much of both general and region or country-specific accounts of post-communism, as evidenced by Okey (2004), Kolsto (2000), Cowan (2000) and Bellamy (2003) for example, this tends to often focus on the most *overtly* relevant political and cultural practices, usually being those that can be characterised as nationalistic ‘top-down’ processes driven by various elites (see also Sugar, 1995 and Gilberg, 2000, for example) – in accordance with the theories of nationalism developed by Anderson (1983) and Gellner (1983). However, simultaneous elite-driven processes driven by a *non*-nationalist ideology, but nonetheless participating in a national discourse, have tended to receive less attention, as have disparate and less easily accessible ‘bottom-up’ cultural and social practices.

It is clear, however, from work such as that of Ramet (2009) that, across all of the post-Yugoslav successor states, issues and debates concerning national identity (whether directly or indirectly) play a central role in political discourse across the whole spectrum of

post-socialist parties and therefore, as is to be expected, are a key aspect of the nation-building dynamics of such states. Moreover, as Brown (2003) has discussed in the case of Macedonia for example, spontaneous and non-centralised cultural and social habits also have a significant role within this diverse national discourse. Hence it is worth attempting to redress the balance somewhat by widening and complicating the notions of national discourse to take these latter ideologies and practices into account within studies of the nation-building that, in all its various and complex facets, continues to be an unavoidable and influential aspect of life in the region.

Post-Yugoslav cinemas and, as I hope to show, tropes of madness therein can be better understood if situated within this context. One reason for this is that a key factor in accounting for the persistent centrality of national identity in political discourse across post-Yugoslav successor states and their societies is the opening for a utopian, or at least 'better', realisable, future life that is implied as accompanying the achievement of a certain idealised (national) identity. So, as in other notable instances throughout the history of radical politics (from Nazi Germany to the U.S.S.R), political discourse works to offset investment in the present by dangling the better future carrot and thus appeasing current dissatisfaction by the promise of the inevitable future pay-off. As Jović (2004) has argued, 'vision-driven political systems' (such as that of Yugoslav socialism from 1945-1990) often depend upon the careful managing of structures of self and other perception, as a means of characterising present shortcomings ultimately as problems of national, racial, ethnic etc. identity. Though such a political system is no longer in place in the post-Yugoslav successor states, domestic politics continues to operate with strong evidence of 'vision-driven' practice, albeit in the new fledgling multi-party democratic system. Hence the work of the imaginary, as the process of psychic mediation between the internal and external world – essentially a site of negotiation between the 'ego and its images' (Miller, 1997: 280), in exploring self-perception and representation (and the construction of the national 'other' – of special interest to Jović) continues to be a fundamentally political process, central as it is to the nation-state formation/nation building processes across the post-Yugoslav states.

Post-Yugoslav film studies have rightly therefore responded to these dynamics by often foregrounding how certain films engage contemporaneous discourses and ideologies around national identities and post-Yugoslav nation-building. Such questions have indeed

proved a central research focus throughout all post-socialist visual cultures. Popular cultural engagements with contemporary discourses on collective identity also abound in the various cinemas of the former USSR where the nation-building imperative has been an equally prominent political goal and cultural theme in recent years. Numerous studies in the field of Russian film and television studies have examined stylistic and narrative features of popular works relative to national self-other representation and the ways in which such texts relate to contemporary nation-building discourses (see Beumers (1999), Hutchings (2008) and Hashamova (2007) as examples). Likewise, English-language scholarship is slowly also turning similar attention to these issues in other areas of the former USSR, with Rouland (2013) providing the first equivalent research in the Central Asian context. In the post-Yugoslav context however, one limitation of existing work on how cinemas have acknowledged and engaged the prominence of national identity discourses in successor state cultures is that, once again, they have been based on a somewhat narrow corpus (again centred on the most internationally prominent films and film-makers).

Iordanova (2001) highlights this point in a detailed and extensive literature review on the debates concerning *Underground* (Kusturica, 1995) and its ideological dimensions relative to nationalist politics of the time. Iordanova's discussion skilfully handles the inordinate quantity of sources centred on this influential and prominent film attending to the various ideological readings concurrent at the time of its release (it is not an exaggeration to state that the volume of English-language writing on this one film probably outweighs that of all other post-Yugoslav titles combined). I contend that the numerous studies summarised by Iordanova are perfectly valid and comprehensive with regard to the corpus with which they are concerned (essentially *Underground* and occasionally some of Emir Kusturica's other works) – but consider it desirable to expand the discussion to include a wider range of texts for purposes of complicating the range of ideological positions (relative to the break-up and nation-building processes) currently attributed to post-Yugoslav cinemas.

Tropes of madness in cinema, then, lend themselves particularly well to the exploration of these questions of identity and self and other-perception since madness is itself often defined using very mobile and discursively-maintained boundaries between self and other. Tropes of madness are highly relevant to the nation-building political discourse which operates within post-Yugoslav societies, and will thus also be discussed in the thesis

relative to such contexts. This is therefore the fourth and final core contribution of the study: to provide an analysis of how post-Yugoslav cinemas have engaged the processes of post-Yugoslav nation-building, especially with regard to participating in discourses around national identity, but – crucially – to base the discussion on an alternate corpus of films and textual features than those currently studied in such a context.

Ultimately therefore the thesis represents the first study exploring the vital role that tropes of madness have played in post-Yugoslav cinemas during and after the years of the break-up as a means for thinking through the experiences and consequences of the period. Moreover, most of the films included represent significant productions (within the context of emerging independent national industries – or even in the careers of notable directors) which have thus far been absent from currently available literature. Thus the core original contribution is a simultaneous introduction of new texts to discussions on post-Yugoslav cinemas – and the highlighting of hitherto unstudied textual features which facilitate their engagement with themes of trauma and identity in the post-Yugoslav context.

1.4. On corpus selection

As discussed previously, with the inherent cultural variability of madness – an element of interpretation is inevitably involved in selecting the corpus of films for the analysis – rather than being presented with a ready-made corpus such as the oeuvre of a particular director for example. Owing to this historical and cultural variability, madness can be invoked at a textual level in a multitude of both more and less explicit ways. Likewise, even where madness might be only slightly implicit at a textual level (or perhaps even entirely absent) it can sometimes equally validly be introduced as a critical or interpretive concept by the viewer or critic. Given the earlier definition of madness, which inherently entails the interpretations of various norms and limits (some of which are discursively maintained and therefore subjectively variable); it is therefore essential to elaborate on how the madness criteria have been applied within this study for purposes of corpus selection.

Firstly, since the main research objective relates to exploring how madness has been used to facilitate thinking about the Yugoslav break-up and aftermath, the foremost requirement was that films should in all cases be ones also concerned, on a thematic level,

with these contemporary contexts.²⁴ Secondly, madness should in some way be evoked at a textual level throughout, largely for the reason that including films with even an implicit or passing relevance to madness would encompass potentially tens if not hundreds of titles. Faced with the imperative to choose a manageable corpus, it was felt that those films in which madness was more consistently (and explicitly) present at a textual level would provide a richer set of case studies for the thesis (and also a good indicator of whether further work might be worthwhile to expand the focus to a wider corpus at a later date). The means by which this textual evocation of madness could be introduced is relatively open although, after extensive viewing of post-Yugoslav film output, in practice it came down to two commonly used techniques: via the use of settings (such as mental hospitals or asylums), and via use of aesthetic formal or narrative features (which equally indicate a character's inner subjective state as differing in certain ways from those around him/her). More subtle uses of madness, such as for example films which adopt a more realist inspired presentation of characters suffering mental disturbance (i.e. no access to internal subjective experience for example) have been excluded on the grounds that the reliance on madness is lesser (although not entirely absent) in these films' explorations of post-Yugoslav break-up and transition contexts. These films require a much more discerning and informed viewer to recognise the inner turmoil of characters, despite being given very limited information about this at the textual level, and are therefore ones where madness is potentially (but not necessarily) introduced in the act of viewing – within particular contexts and with certain audiences. The use of madness is here clearly looser than in the films selected below, so ultimately, for both practical and theoretical reasons, these films are mentioned occasionally in passing where relevant – but do not form part of the core corpus for the work. Ultimately therefore, the key for the corpus selection is that some explicit and persistent textually-invoked conception of madness functions as a trope for facilitating an engagement with themes around the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav experience of the 1990s-2000s. Furthermore, an effort was made to balance the corpus in the terms of producing country so as to better facilitate the comparative dimensions of the research. Finally,

²⁴ In practice however, I actually only came across one post-Yugoslav film which fulfilled my criteria regarding madness being explicitly present on a textual level – but which did not fulfil the other criteria of a thematic engagement with these historical contexts of Yugoslav break-up, *Doctor of Madness* (Hadžić, 2003). The film's action takes place entirely in the waiting room of a psychiatric doctor's office, in which all the attending patients gradually compare their various eccentricities and romantic foibles, realising that they are in fact not alone in thinking themselves a little bit odd.

although not a crucial or primary selection criteria, the corpus also strived for originality in the hope of expanding the ‘master corpus’ of post-Yugoslav film studies by looking at titles hitherto largely absent from it (fulfilling this fact alone however was of course not considered adequate grounds for inclusion in the thesis film corpus).

The range of titles chosen here – after extensive viewing of a large proportion of the, albeit modest, total post-Yugoslav output available – is based on the identification of three types of commonly found tropes of madness, all of which feature characters marked within the narrative as having ‘massive and lasting disturbances of behaviour, emotion, and intellect’ (Scull, 2011) and where this aspect forms a substantial focus within the films in question (i.e. not limited only to a minor character on screen for only one scene).²⁵ Only one of these tropes has thus far been even partially studied in relation to madness (the aforementioned trope of the wild Balkan man). The other two trope types with which this thesis will be concerned are split between the two thesis sections, the first focusing on films that make use of asylum settings and, in the second, films which focus on unstable diegetic realities in the portrayal of PTSD. The first thesis section will include three films: *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* (Croatia), *Burlesque Tragedy* (Serbia-Bulgaria), and *Kukumi* (Kosovo-Croatia), while the second will encompass four others *Mirage* (Macedonia), *Loving Glances* (Serbia-France), *Fuse* (Bosnia-Germany) and *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Serbia).

Films were chosen in which this ‘disturbance of behaviour, emotion, and intellect’ is portrayed as a lasting problem – in some way related thematically to experiences of the Yugoslav break-up and subsequent transition contexts. They feature narratives which focus on individuals with a severe disruption to their mental functioning either on a personal subjective level (as in films in section 2) or at a wider institutional level (section 1). In terms of how such tropes conceptualise madness, there is a marked difference across the two thesis sections. The narratives in section 1 tend not to focus on individuals’ subjective mental states but rather use images of the asylum (and groups of characters found therein) as a way of examining self-other relations as structured by dominant national discourses. In these films, the outdated image of the asylum and its inmates thereby becomes a metaphor

²⁵ It is for this reason that a film such as *The Optimists* (Paskaljević, 2006), which features the inside-out asylum trope studied in section 2 of the thesis, has not been included within the film analysis sections: this aspect of the film forms only one of the five short segments that comprise *The Optimists*. The latter film does nonetheless indicate the wider evidence of such tropes of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas beyond the titles analysed within chapters 3-6.

for the repressed components of powerful ideologies active in the post-Yugoslav transition contexts. Here the crucial appeal of madness lies in its historical association with various forms of repression as legitimated by numerous (non-medical) ideological discourses. Meanwhile, the films analysed in section 2 instead focus on the individual mental state of characters suffering from disturbances of perception and subsequent challenges in making sense of their traumatic experiences during the break-up. Here the conception of madness is essentially a version of post-traumatic stress disorder, in which a traumatised individual is unable to process extreme shock or loss, consequently requiring (but not always receiving) help from the surrounding society.

All of the films selected can be classified as ‘feature films’, not only with regard to their running time but also by virtue of the fact that they have been sold by their producers as such, exhibited theatrically, and possess many of the textual elements common to such films. While there are numerous variations – in production funding resources available, exhibition duration and reach and so on, all of the films nonetheless utilise, at the textual level, various formal conventions (traits relating to narrative structure and complexity for example) of feature length fiction cinema. As the thesis title refers to ‘post-Yugoslav cinema’ this could also encompass other forms such as short films, animation, documentary, and children’s films. However, as this study is primarily a text-based one, incorporating theoretical tools that are specific to feature length cinema of this kind, a decision has been made to focus solely on such titles. Feature length fiction cinema is also unique in often representing an intersection between the fantasy and imagination of creative professionals, public institutions (which in such countries often distribute government-allocated production funding) and the considerations of both about communicating to mass audiences. Furthermore, as this form also continues to attract the largest audiences and thus holds a more culturally central position than the other aforementioned ‘minor’ formats and genres, it seems like the most logical place to begin such a study.

Finally, in terms of the language of the films, most of those selected for the study are in what was formally Serbo-Croat and is now, following political policies of language divergence in the region, Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian. *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* is therefore in Croatian, *Fuse* in Bosnian, while *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* are in Serbian. The others all feature at least two languages of the former Yugoslavia with *Loving Glances* encompassing Serbian, Slovenian, and Macedonian (as

well as some Greek, English, and Bulgarian); *Kukumi* featuring mainly Kosovo Albanian with some Serbian, and *Mirage* being mostly in Macedonian with some Bosnian. Although primarily aimed at domestic audiences within individual successor republics, it is also tenable to state that secondary ‘pan-Yugoslav’ audiences (as well as international ones) were sought by the films’ distributors and directors – evident for example in casting choices whereby stars from neighbouring republics often feature in some of the titles or in the use of promotional interviews in press from neighbouring states. In practice however, due to the limitations of theatrical distribution (particularly in the period in question here) most of these ‘regional’ audiences were found via television and internet streaming rather than bricks-and-mortar cinemas (which is a factor currently hampering quantitative research on audience figures and film reception in the region, particularly with regard to the 1990s). It is nonetheless evident that the domestic audience for these films (i.e. those understanding the original version without need of dubbing or translation) could be thought of extending beyond immediate successor state borders and over to other former Yugoslav republics as well.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

The next chapter of the thesis summarises the key theoretical framework which underpins the study outlining how cinema and film culture is understood to relate to post-Yugoslav societies’ processes of understanding the consequences of Yugoslav break-up via the notion of film as a site for engaging various public discourses. Thereafter there will be a definition of the specific approach used to define tropes of madness (borrowing the semantic/syntactic method from genre studies) and finally an explanation of what is meant by the term trope.

The first analysis section of the thesis (covering chapters 3-4) will then turn to what I will refer to as the ‘inside-out asylum trope’ in three films from Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo. These films are characterised by a breakdown in confinement which entails the escape of the asylum patients or inmates into the surrounding society in a trope which typically structures a critical engagement with various dominant ideologies, whether that of Milošević’s militarism in the Serbian *Burlesque Tragedy*, Kosovan nation-building post-1999 in Qosja’s *Kukumi*, or unresolved remnants of Titoist legacies in *Marshall Tito’s Spirit*. In terms of the key research questions, all of the film analysis chapters (3-6) will in

turn address the four core questions. The first chapter of the section (chapter 3) provides an overview of what the inside-out asylum tropes entails on a textual level in terms of narrative and secondly how the post-Yugoslav variant differs from more common uses of the asylum in other cinemas. There is then an analysis of how both *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Marshall Tito's Spirit* make use of the othering power of madness in order to effect an estrangement from dominant ideologies and the social practices they engender. Ultimately, the inside-out asylum trope is therefore shown to provide a highly critical means for re-thinking the ideologies of those either currently or previously in power at a time when political pluralism had not yet been established in either Croatia or Serbia, effectively amounting to an 'ideological demobilisation' of Titoist and Milošević's discursive strategies.

The fourth chapter continues in this vein by providing a close reading of the first Kosovan feature made since the province became a UN protectorate in 1999, here examining the inside-out asylum trope relative to Kosovan nation-building discourses and the trope's combination with road movie conventions. Ultimately here madness is used in a remarkably similar context to the previous films (in the first years of independence for that particular republic when political pluralism was not yet established) – again facilitating an estrangement from the contemporary nation-building discourse of the time. Here madness is also combined with road movie motifs to facilitate numerous encounters between insiders (the rural communities visited by the escaped asylum inmates) and outsiders (the travellers/inmates) which are structured as an assessment of the values of Kosovan nation-building discourses and practices.

The second section of the thesis (chapters 5-6) will focus on a 'multiple realities' trope of madness evident in a number of films as a device for dramatising the experience of individual trauma. Here I will divide the films into a first group which have a more conventional approach (*Loving Glances*, *Mirage*, and *Fuse*) and one with a more avant-garde approach, Milutin Petrović's *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom*. Chapter 5 assesses a trope wherein protagonists struggling to come to terms with traumatic experiences arising from Yugoslav break-up begin to 'hallucinate' as means of repairing these losses. Here perceptual instability is introduced as a means for conceptualising the gaps existing between life prior to traumatic events, after them, and idealised wishes for the future.

The sixth chapter assesses a similar trope found in the experimental work of DIY film-maker and film scholar Milutin Petrović, wherein hallucination and multiple realities are again invoked in reference to trauma – although here the focus is conceptualising the fundamental unreality of the experience of conflict and Yugoslav break-up in which the subject is confronted with events and experiences which are inherently unknowable. Both chapters here provide an analysis of two textual variations on how trauma has been conceptualised through the use of the multiple realities trope of madness across four films. Finally, in the seventh chapter, I return to the thesis objective and core questions in order to summarise the study's findings and suggest some pathways for future research.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1. Introduction

The core research question for the thesis is to evaluate how madness has been used in post-Yugoslav cinemas to engage and understand experiences resulting from the break-up of the SFRY throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Since the question is to be approached from a textual perspective (rather than, for example, qualitative audience surveys) it is necessary, before setting out the framework within which I analyse the specific films treated in the thesis, to outline how films in general might be considered to participate in the broader social sphere in creating understandings around such events. This discussion will centre on the conception of film as one example of a public discourse, featuring various unique formal characteristics, but nonetheless one which intersects ultimately with a variety of other discourses circulating within post-Yugoslav societies during this period and contributing towards the effort to understand or interpret the disparate but inter-related events of Yugoslav break-up. Once this initial theoretical interface has been established, the second half of the chapter will then move onto an outline of the methodological approach to be undertaken in the subsequent textual analysis with regard to the specific corpus of films selected for the study.

2.2. Understanding the Yugoslav break-up and its consequences: film as public discourse

‘What might we learn from viewing a number of films devoted to a single incident or major subject? To what extent will those films, taken together, relate to, comment upon, and add to the larger discourse?’ (Rosenstone, 2012: 151)

Rosenstone’s work on history and film has been vastly influential in opening up the interactions between cinema and history as a meaningful and viable area of study with perhaps the ultimate conclusion being that – although not produced within the same contexts and by the same methods as written history – films about various historical persons, events, and periods nonetheless play a significant role, across all contemporary societies, in shaping how the past is understood. In short, certain films participate – often very influentially – in discourses around historical events and episodes. Because of the

complex interplay between written history and various idiosyncratic features of feature film (reliance on dramatic invention, interaction between fictional and non-fictional narratives, subjective, personalised and/or emotionalised perspectives of events to name a few examples) cinema's engagement with history is inherently different from that of written academic history but, nonetheless, clearly forms part of a society's means of thinking about the past:

‘...this practice of invention may be enough to remove from the dramatic film the word ‘history’, but certainly not the ideas of historical ‘thinking’ or ‘understanding’.’ (2012: 183)

Arguably, this ‘practice of invention’ is the very property of cinema that makes it so useful for studying how events and experiences are interpreted and thought of within particular socio-cultural formations. One of the more straightforward contentions being made within this thesis is that the various films selected for the corpus, all featuring tropes of madness in various forms and set either during or just after significant developments of Yugoslav break-up, represent one prominent method by which thinking about the recent pasts of SFRY demise unfolded in the successor states. A goal of this thesis is to illuminate precisely what kinds of thinking about the break-up of Yugoslavia can be found in such films – and the role of tropes of madness therein.

On a general level, film culture is therefore understood as a heterogeneous space in which the techniques and properties of the feature film (which distinguish it formally from the written academic history Rosenstone seeks to inter-relate it with) produce meanings that interact and inter-sect with other institutional, mediated or cultural discourses. In other words, while many of the techniques by which film produces meanings and acts upon the audience are uniquely derived from its formal properties (and/or conventions of employing them) – such meanings nonetheless are invariably co-articulated with those produced by numerous other text types. Cumulatively, these various written, verbal and visual ‘utterances’ – whether taking the form of a current affairs TV debate, a political party manifesto, or a feature length film – form part of a master discourse²⁶ which we can

²⁶ Of course it should be noted that not every type of text, or every single film, produced in the post-Yugoslav space during or immediately following the Yugoslav break-up is necessarily concerned with the same issues but, in practice, in the field of feature length cinema certainly there has been a significant focus within the post-Yugoslav cinemas on engaging with the events of the 1990s and the experience of them,

characterise as part of the overall process of understanding and thinking about the various events of the Yugoslav break-up from 1991-2008.²⁷ This ‘master discourse’ is the sum of all the many disparate discourses on various aspects of SFRY break-up in the successor states that together comprise what some discourse analysts would term as a ‘conversation’:

Sometimes when we talk or write, our words don’t just allude or relate to someone else’s words (as in the case of intertextuality), but to themes, debates, or motifs that have been the focus of much talk and writing in some social group with which we are familiar or with society as a whole... I refer to all the talk and writing that has gone on in a specific social group or in society at large around a major theme, debate, or motif as a “conversation”... (Gee, 1999: 21-22)

Thus the notion of discourse which interests us here is twofold: firstly, relating to its knowledge production effects (about the Yugoslav break-up, as umbrella event for many smaller and local experiences during this time, and subsequent forming of independent successor states) and secondly, a discourse which incorporates numerous non-verbal signs whose meanings equally inter-relate to purely linguistic ones in order to produce this knowledge. This latter understanding of the term is normally distinguished as Discourse with a capital ‘D’ to separate it from a notion of discourse as referring to a specific, finite and discrete text.²⁸ However, as all references to the term in this thesis relate to the capital ‘D’ definition of discourse, I have made the decision to simply state that fact within the methodology and then proceed with using a lower case – discourse – throughout the thesis for the sake of tidiness in the text.

However, in order to account for both the types of knowledge that films produce and their ways of doing so (i.e. rarely, as evident in the subsequent film discussions, factual ‘true’ or ‘false’ claims about a historical person or event but much more often interpretive perspectives on complex series of events, usually foregrounding affective and subjective experiences of them) – the analysis does not propose to approach film with the aid of discourse analysis methodologies. This methodological choice is motivated by the conviction that such an approach is in most cases potentially reductive when applied to a

although thus far it is largely only the direct images of conflict which have received attention in the academic literature.

²⁷ This is the period between the first declaration of independence of a political entity formerly within the SFRY in 1991 (the republic of Slovenia) and the most recent in 2008 (the autonomous province of Kosovo, formerly one of two such entities within the republic of Serbia).

²⁸ This distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘Discourse’ is drawn from Kolsto (2009) and Gee (1999).

fictional feature film by being ill-equipped to attend to the many unique meaning-making processes inherent to such texts (in a sense, films are too open and qualitative for most exclusively discourse analysis methodologies to be satisfactory). Rather, the importance of discourse as a concept to the analysis is in providing a theoretical basis for explaining how the films to be discussed later on might participate in the lives and thinking of the societies and cultures from which they originate, and to which they are largely addressed. Film is one of the components of master discourses – or ‘conversations’ to use Gee’s term, around the areas of knowledge deemed important to a group of people. In the particular case of this thesis, we may re-phrase the above by specifying that we are interested in the area of knowledge around the events of the 1990s-2000s which saw the demise of the SFRY and the group of people in question as the citizens of the new successor states who experienced these events both firsthand – and, subsequently, in a variety of re-imagined and mediated ways on their cinema screens.

Central to this connection between film culture and other forms of thinking and speaking about the recent past in post-Yugoslav societies is the semantic notion of a ‘theme’ – which can for example be understood as a nodal point of intersection between a fictional narrative set during real historical events in a feature film, an account of the same period in a history textbook – or indeed the understanding of such a period/events implied in the language used to refer to it by a politician or a historian. Theme is an interpretative effect derived from the textual properties of most text types, reflecting the categories used in the general organisation of human knowledge, and thus represents the semantic connection that can be shared by texts as formally disparate as a feature length film, a school textbook or a pop song; in short, a key concept for defining how films bear meaning that goes beyond their own internal workings.²⁹ Ultimately, the focus of the thesis is therefore on how the various cinematic tropes of madness found in the films in question engage themes around the break-up and thus contribute to shaping how it is understood in the societies and cultures in question.

I would like now to position these films’ thematic focus on experiences and issues arising from the Yugoslav break-up in relation to a notion of national discourse – understood as a public negotiation, between various, disparate and unequal voices which centres around the narratives and values which are used to ideologically define and sustain

²⁹ This definition of a theme is drawn largely from Hjort (2000) and will be elaborated on more extensively further in the chapter.

the nation-state – and the manner in which they might be converted into specific action, whether political policy, cultural activity or even everyday language use. Indeed, as discussed within the literature review, the Yugoslav break-up is now more commonly thought of in current literature as a process of nation-state formation (rather than one of state disintegration – which previously isolated Yugoslavia’s post-socialist transition as an exceptional case amongst other neighbouring countries). Moreover, the post-Yugoslav films in question here are all ones which largely approach the recent past according to the imperatives of their present transitional moments. Hence the portrayals of Yugoslav break-up often focus on the immediate aftermath of traumatic breaks and events (rather than images of conflict itself for instance), in which the expectations and aspirations for the future are to be considered. In short, as will become apparent throughout subsequent chapters, these films can be considered as texts having a high thematic overlap with other contemporaneous instances of national discourses wherein the primary concern is to define events of Yugoslav break-up relative to future developments and goals of the post-Yugoslav successor states. As is common with national discourse on a political level during rapid nation-building periods such as this, where the imaginary plays a significant role in negotiations around future aspirations and goals, so too in the films of the period we can equally discern that cinema’s inherent reliance on the imaginary provides a valuable means for engaging, assimilating and evaluating the contents of the national imaginary; mediating between its fears and anxieties, hopes and desires for the future, and structuring understandings of the self relative to the national collective. The cinemas in question here are therefore highly relevant to notions of national identity and the post-Yugoslav nation-building process – something which will here be further outlined at a broader theoretical level as a foundation for the subsequent film analysis.

2.3. Post-Yugoslav nation-building and film: a theoretical interface

Typically, studies of cinema and nation have revolved around exploring the ways in which the practices of producing, distributing, and consuming films are governed by, and interact with, social and political groupings organised around national identity. As Hjort and Mackenzie (2000) put it:

What kinds of extradiegetic materials and practices are pertinent in a thorough account of the role played by nation-states in the production

and reception of cinematic works? To what extent, and how exactly, do cinematic works contribute to the kinds of imaginings that sustain nation states? And what are the implications for national cinema of claims to the effect that nations and states are increasingly going their separate ways? (2000: 3)

As alluded to by the third question in the above passage, more recently cinema/nation studies have involved debates around the validity of allocating national specificity of origin to particular films or the industries from which they arose ('Mexican cinema', 'Swedish cinema' and so on) as well as on examining the ways that state cultural organisations responsible for film and media activities interpret national identities and tailor their work in specific ways as a result.

From the outset however, certain inherent problems challenged the validity and desirability of some national cinema study approaches, as Higson (2000) outlines:

It is clearly a helpful taxonomic labelling device... but the process of labelling is always to some degree tautologous, fetishising the national rather than merely describing it. It thus erects boundaries between films produced in different nation-states though they may still have much in common. It may therefore obscure the degree of cultural diversity, exchange and interpenetration that marks so much cinematic activity. (2000: 64)

Higson hence concludes that ultimately 'it is inappropriate to assume that cinema and film culture are bound by the limits of the nation-state' (2000: 73). If this was the case in the 1980s-1990s when national cinema studies were first rapidly expanding in popularity, then it is even more true today with the global economic and political developments of the decades following the fall of communism being characterised by greater fluidity in the movement of capital, trade and (some) labour, including in the world of film production and distribution. Studies of cinema and nation have thus been pushed to develop a new set of analytical tools that account for this increasingly transnational nature of cultural production (Hjort & MacKenzie (2000)). Indeed, as technological developments and economic liberalisation constantly accelerate and complicate the cultural/cinematic flows that criss-cross the planet (internet distribution, piracy, increased emphasis on foreign distribution, international film festivals etc.), the former industry-centred debates about national cinemas appear increasingly invalid, or at best only sporadically relevant or useful.

However, despite these caveats and concerns about discussing nations and national identity in the context of cinema, there remains one respect in which the relevance of one to the other is not on the wane: cinema's active participation in shaping national imaginings and identifications (the second of Hjort and Mackenzie's three questions above). While not always the most frequently adopted approach in anthologies on cinema and nation, this seems to be as much down to the fact that the relevant theoretical work for such studies lies mainly in film semiotics (i.e. how cinematic works construct meaning) and not *primarily* in nationalism studies. In other words, the methodological tools for such studies come from film narratology, image semiotics, casting and star studies, etc. and are then applied to examining how these mechanisms of meaning-making in a particular film might 'contribute to the kinds of imaginings that sustain [or complicate and destabilise] nation states' (Hjort and Mackenzie). Considering the declining relevance of some national cinema approaches that have been popular in the past, this latter aspect today perhaps represents the means by which studies of cinema and nation continue to offer most contemporary relevance.

It could perhaps even be argued that, with the much wider networks of global film distribution that characterise the practices of the contemporary industry, the role of cinema in shaping national imaginaries is only likely to increase in relevance. This of course is not a new dynamic *per se* (films produced abroad, in the form of the Hollywood product, have dominated global screens the world over for most of the 20th century – barring a few very specific markets) but what is remarkable in recent years is how alternative distribution networks (internet, satellite TV, film festivals)³⁰ are vastly broadening access to a variety of other, non-Hollywood, imported media. The ways in which such media represent national identities and associated historical narratives (if this is their thematic concern – and it often is since this represents a viable strategy for achieving international exposure) thus inevitably shapes and feeds the national imaginary of audiences, particularly with regard to the perception of national and ethnic otherness. Transnational media and film dynamics that create relations between multiple and varied global identities thereby become ever more ingrained within the frameworks that structure national identity.

Hence I wish to proceed with the understanding that film can be 'one of the loci of debates about a nation's governing principles, goals, heritage and history' (Hjort and Mackenzie, 2000: 4). Hjort has highlighted the strange absence of cinematic studies which

³⁰ See Iordanova (2008) work on the 'Long Tail' of film distribution for more on this.

examine the ways in which nation is thematised, and thus the ways in which film can be seen as one such ‘loci of debates’ – despite the fact that passing mention of national cinemas being also ‘thematically [as well as industrially] defined’ can be found in much literature on the topic. Hjort writes: ‘themes of nation are topical, rather than perennial, and involve a process of marking and flagging that distinguishes them from instances of banal nationalism.’ (2000: 103). The mention here of ‘banal nationalism’ serves to introduce Bilig’s work on nationalism (1995), whereby everyday and seemingly unremarkable practices and objects (a weather forecast, a postage stamp) are also seen to contribute to the maintenance of the national imaginary precisely through the things which aren’t explicitly highlighted (i.e. through presupposition). However, Hjort specifies that in the context of a cinematic work such elements, though inevitably present in some capacity, are not sufficient to consider the film as one which participates in a national discourse and functions as a ‘loci’ of such debates.

So, not every film which is made or funded in Bosnia is ‘about’ Bosnia. For the film to engage with imaginings and discourses regarding national identity something further must be happening. Hjort defines this as ‘thematization’:

A theme is a semantic construct that emerges during the process of engaging with a given work... A film’s theme is what the work is *about*. This aboutness is not however, a matter of full fledged referential meanings, for only in the case of specific genres do authors make literal claims about actual persons or events, which can and should then be addressed in terms of truth and falsity. Themes are not true or false, but more or less interesting, depending on the extent to which they shed light on certain perennial human concerns. (2000: 105)

Hjort, quoting Brinker, also points out that themes are inherently intertextual, and are thus not always specifically cinematic: ‘themes are loci where artistic literary texts encounter other texts: texts of philosophy or the social and human sciences, texts of religion and social ideologies, journalistic texts, including gossip columns, and personal texts such as diaries and letters’ (2000: 36). Here we might add that themes are not only loci where these various other text types are encountered but also, owing to cinema’s visual properties, where non-textual aspects of culture can also be met in a dialogic manner.

In any case, in order for (a) nation to be considered a theme, ‘thematization’ must take place – it is not automatically taken for granted just because a film inevitably has a geographic and industrial origin, or even a specific diegetic setting. That is to say:

A self-conscious directing of focal awareness toward those meaningful elements that, when interpreted, reveal what a given film is strictly speaking about. A theme of nation will, of course, typically emerge as a result of a ‘flagging’ of precisely those elements listed above [specifics of language, location, actors, props, cultural practices etc.]. But unless this flagging takes place, the elements do not amount to a theme. (2000: 108).

A significant portion of films produced in the wake of Yugoslav break-up in all of the successor republics feature various textual features that perform this ‘directing of focal awareness’ or ‘flagging’ of themes related in some way to understandings of nation – unsurprising considering the significant restructuring of political formations unfolding during the 1990s and early 2000s. In other words, the mechanisms by which a film’s ‘aboutness’ is generated often worked to relate the events of fictional narratives to current thinking about recent historical experiences for many citizens of the former Yugoslavia. In this sense, it becomes feasible to constitute post-Yugoslav cinemas as one of many public spheres in which a thematic engagement with Yugoslav break-up was synonymous with a participation in a wider national discourse assessing the meanings of the past in terms that bear upon values which might guide thinking about future aspirations for the successor states. Thus, sometimes complications might arise if we seek to label these films ‘nationally’ in terms of their origin from an industrial perspective due to factors such as multiple sources of funding (some often international in nature), diverse cast and crew or the use of filming locations often outside the country which provides the narrative setting – but it is nonetheless clear that at least on some thematic levels, these texts are primarily concerned with issues integral (although not always exclusively so) to Bosnian, Serbian, Kosovan etc. nationhood during and just after the protracted Yugoslav break-up. It is in this sense that a film like *Kukumi* made in 2004 in Kosovo and released in 2005, but set in 1999 during the Serb withdrawal from the province, can be considered as both a text which creates meanings around a definitive actually-existing historical moment in the post-Yugoslav transition and also as one which does so in a highly politicised way – relating its

presentation of 1999 very much to the present in which it was made and, in doing so, providing a perspective on where the Kosovan future might be heading.

This initial theoretical section has therefore focused upon situating post-Yugoslav cinemas relative to the societies from which these films originate, conceptualising the feature film as a text type which can participate very much within discourses around the break-up of the SFRY and how these events are to be understood by virtue of processes of ‘thematisation’ – despite the high reliance on invention characteristic of the fictional feature film. Rosenstone’s work is a key methodological touchstone which enables us to acknowledge and incorporate this latter aspect into the analysis, thereby integrating a fuller range of cinematic features, beyond simply evaluating if a narrative event in a historical film is ‘true’ or ‘false’ relative to written historical discourses. Film shapes thinking about the past often in very specific and unique ways (for example generating the ‘look’/appearance of the past or even in providing an affective perspective on events to a greater extent than written history) and it is the goal of the remaining section of the methodology to outline how these cinematic techniques for engaging thinking about historical events are to be approached in the post-Yugoslav cinemas in question here.

2.4. Approaching tropes of madness from a semantic/syntactic perspective

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to outlining the specific approach underpinning the close analysis of the corpus of films chosen for this study. Since the concern here is with how tropes of madness *in particular* structure thinking about Yugoslav break-up and thereby engage contemporaneous national discourses in the transition context, the ensuing methodology has been designed to pay particular attention to this textual feature.

Having gathered together a corpus of films featuring madness from the various post-Yugoslav cinemas (see the introduction for more on the criteria for this process of selection) the first methodological step involves an ordering of the material. It is at this stage that a decision to approach the material bilaterally has been made in the expectation that such an analysis will more comprehensively answer the core question of how madness has been used to understand the break-up of Yugoslavia and its consequences. The first phase of this bilateral approach, prompted by an initial impressionistic observation that certain similarities were evident across multiple texts selected, involves using methods

borrowed from the field of genre studies in order to discern in more detail the nature of these recurring textual features. This discussion will thereby be guided by the principles of the semantic/syntactic approach to genre, as championed especially by critics such as Altman (1984) and Jameson (1991), which have been developed over a number of years as effective ways to study a group of films in terms of their shared visual motifs, themes, and narrative strategies for purposes of defining the meanings and boundaries of various genres. In short, the analytical approach is perfectly suited to determining what links multiple films together on a textual level and therefore to uncovering some more consistently-occurring cultural dynamics that go far beyond the individual text. It is on the basis of these common semantic/syntactic properties that recurring ‘tropes’ of madness have been identified – and the film analysis chapters ordered accordingly. It is only once this initial, more general, survey has been undertaken that the chapters will also proceed with a specific close reading of the individual films in question.

The initial genre-studies inspired approach is undertaken in the expectation that only through a combination of the inter-textual and individual close reading approaches can a multi-faceted and comprehensive understanding of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas be achieved. The adoption of Altman’s semantic/syntactic approach is motivated by its adaptability in harnessing the ‘best of both worlds’ of textual genre analysis by enabling us to identify not only recurrent features of setting, visual style or characterisation (semantic components) but also ones of how these elements are combined within narrative structures (syntactic aspects) and ultimately which general thematic tensions they might generate. In other words, the semantic/syntactic approach enables us not only to identify that the asylum features as a setting in numerous post-Yugoslav cinemas (a semantic commonality) but also that over the course of these narratives it is repeatedly escaped from or abandoned, for various reasons related to Yugoslav break-up, by its patient(s) (a syntactic characteristic) and that ultimately the thematic oppositions generated by such textual features are those between individual freedom/social order and cohesion, or anarchy/repression (to name only two examples) – all of which then come to bear in more specific ways upon the topical themes of post-Yugoslav transitions that are thematised within the films. Altman summarises the approach thus:

While there is anything but general agreement on the exact frontier separating semantic from syntactic views, we can as a whole

distinguish between generic definitions that depend upon a list of common traits, attitudes, characters, shots, locations, sets, and the like – thus stressing the semantic elements that make up the genre – and definitions that play up instead certain constitutive relationships between undesignated and variable placeholders – relationships that might be called the genre’s fundamental syntax. The semantic approach thus stresses the genre’s building blocks, while the syntactic view privileges the structures into which they are arranged. (1984: 10)

Prior to Altman’s intervention in the debate, genre analysts had tended to favour one or the other approach – but Altman makes clear that each has a use-value and a rationale for implementation:

...we might well note the divergent qualities associated with these two approaches. While the semantic approach has little explanatory power, it is applicable to a large number of films. Conversely, the syntactic approach surrenders broad applicability in return for the ability to isolate a genre’s specific meaning-bearing structures. This alternative seemingly leaves the genre analysts in a quandary: choose the semantic view and you give up *explanatory power*; choose the syntactic view and you do without broad applicability. (1984: 11)

Altman argues convincingly that it is both feasible and desirable to therefore adopt both semantic and syntactic perspectives when analysing multiple texts in order to identify how their commonalities contribute towards their potential to create meanings. Only in this way is it possible to be alert to what Altman calls the ‘linguistic meaning of the text’s component parts and the secondary or textual meaning that those parts acquire through a structuring process internal to the text or to the genre’ (1984: 14). Thus only in this way can we come to a credible interpretation of the meaning of images of the hallucinating trauma victim or the abandoned asylum which feature so prominently in the post-Yugoslav films to be discussed within the individual chapters – ultimately to answer the question of how they create meanings about experiences of the 1990s and early 2000s, and how this bears upon the present challenges for imagining and choosing futures in the successor states.

However, in recognition of some of the widely acknowledged shortcomings of such methods – namely that they can detrimentally detach the work of art from the realm of culture – a-historicising and essentialising its meanings (Altman, 1984), the study will also then incorporate a further methodological step which will involve examining the ways in which tropes of madness relate to these various films’ thematising processes. This

represents an attempt to connect more general accounts of tropes of madness in a formal and functional sense (derived from the semantic/syntactic approach), with the specific textual (and occasionally, para-textual) contexts in which they are found. In other words, the intention is to ultimately consider how madness informs meaning-making around post-Yugoslav experience in these films at the individual textual level. Each film analysis section will therefore adopt a bilateral approach – considering first a group of films for purposes of illuminating how the common trope structures work on a more general level, before moving on to examine the specific dimensions of their deployment in individual titles. The latter close analysis stage will therefore be inconsistent in the formal aspects of individual films which are to be closely studied, as the main focus is on whichever textual features are relevant to the way madness is invoked for purposes of engaging with themes of post-Yugoslav break-up and transition contexts. In some cases the use of madness is derived from the use of certain editing techniques and the manipulation of documentary footage – while in others it arises from the unusual use of certain visual symbols and images in the context of a particular narrative moment. The close analysis sections will therefore be varied in terms of their formal focus – but consistent in that all the aspects discussed (whether relating to narrative, casting, visual aesthetics, editing, etc) are integral to the centrality of madness in these films’ relation to their settings, themes, and contexts. It is hoped that, with the aid of this combination of critical approaches, the study will achieve a holistic consideration of tropes of madness from a textual perspective – and indeed their significance for the films and cultures in question – vis-à-vis the research aims and objectives.

As discussed in the introduction, the contention throughout the thesis is that madness as a concept is an inherent indicator of the epistemological characteristics of a particular cultural formation by virtue of both its malleability (i.e. understandings of it vary massively historically and culturally) and its position as intersecting with numerous other discourses characterising the parameters and contours of a society’s knowledge and ways of understanding the world.³¹ It is for this reason that historically madness has been variously

³¹ See Foucault (1967) for the most influential of such approaches to madness, essentially presenting a history of madness’s socio-historical variability in European societies from classical antiquity right through to the 1960s. This work continues to greatly inform cultural studies owing to its focus on the extent to which madness can be considered a social construct – although its blindness to biological and medical factors means that the work’s persistence is largely considered counterproductive by some in terms of contemporary understandings of mental illness. In any case, allowances should be made for Foucault’s

defined according to notions of difference that referenced creativity, physical disability, sexuality, political radicalism or trauma to name but a few (again, see the introductory chapter for more on this). By studying madness on screen within the framework of the broadly structural mindset of the semantic/syntactic approach it is hoped that the manner in which madness is able to highlight these epistemological characteristics of thinking (in this case relating to that of post-Yugoslav societies and the break-up of the SFRY) will be all the more evident. On this point it is worth turning to the work of another key writer on genre, Schatz (1981), on the types of thematic opposition (or ‘dramatic conflict’) which genre studies can uncover:

Whatever oppositions we examine in genre films – individual versus community, man versus woman, work versus play, order versus anarchy – these do not represent ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ cultural values. For one of the reasons for a genre’s popularity is the sustained significance of the ‘problem’ that it repeatedly addresses. Thus, generic conflict and resolution involve opposing systems of values and attitudes, *both of which* are deemed significant by contemporary American culture. (1981: 34)

Although Schatz wrote primarily on the Hollywood genres (hence his final comment above) – in the interim since this piece was written, the validity of the above assertion has now also become widely accepted as applicable to non-Hollywood genres. Hence genre studies approaches in general, including the semantic/syntactic method, are inherently geared towards uncovering these conflicting systems of values deemed significant within a culture – and how certain textual features and processes work to resolve (or not in some cases) these opposing values. A semantic/syntactic approach to post-Yugoslav cinemas featuring madness will hopefully similarly uncover not only the opposing values both of which are deemed culturally significant in the particular moment in question – but also how madness mediates their negotiation, ultimately giving an insight into characteristics of the epistemological landscape in which such texts are situated.

Finally, before concluding my discussion of the semantic/syntactic approach it is necessary to resolve one crucial ambiguity raised by the preceding discussion; namely, if

time of writing about madness when today’s modern discourse of mental illness was still mostly non-existent and treatments for madness were undoubtedly characterised by a degree of repression which today continues to inform the cultural imaginary around mental illness – but fortunately not the reality of treatment. Foucault’s understanding of madness is further discussed in chapter 3 where his notion of madness as that which is repressed in dominant ideologies is central to the inside-out asylum trope of madness.

the semantic/syntactic approach is to be used successfully then does it not follow that we might think of the corpus of films selected for this study as some sort of hitherto unidentified ‘madness genre’ in post-Yugoslav cinemas? The answer to this question, as will become evident by the conclusion of the study, is that there are certainly sufficient semantic and syntactic grounds to justify the use of the approach relative to these films – but that their overall number is too low in order to support a fully fledged claim of being a genre unto themselves. It is perhaps more accurate to think of these films as constituting something of a ‘mini-cycle’ – a brief period when certain textual conventions re-occur across multiple texts, arising in this case from the common contexts and themes of post-Yugoslav transition, but not present for long enough or in a sufficient number of titles (although such judgements are of course to an extent approximate) to warrant being considered a unique post-Yugoslav genre. However, taking a wider historical and cultural perspective the post-Yugoslav films do have much in common with many other examples of such ‘tropes of madness’ evident in other historical periods and cinematic cultures. So, ultimately neither a fully-fledged local genre nor a local variant of a Hollywood or perhaps transnational genre, these films do nonetheless have much in common at the textual level with numerous other works arising often in similar contexts at other times through history. Hence there is, I intend to demonstrate, sufficient justification for considering these films from a textual genre perspective – even if they ultimately would not meet all the criteria variably in use to discern the existence of a particular genre.

The second crucial reason why these films might not be considered as part of some ‘madness genre’ is that the texts also reference other, more established, genre motifs and forms (such as that of the road movie, as discussed in chapter 4) – thereby entailing a hybrid form where the insistence on a madness genre of some sort would misrepresent the textual complexity of the these works. It is therefore for this reason that a more appropriate way of thinking about the function of madness in these texts is at the level of a trope, made evident using the techniques of genre studies, but ultimately working more as a crucial device rather than an overriding generic schema. The final section of this chapter will thereby elaborate further this notion of what is understood as a trope – before returning back to how tropes of madness might interact with themes and understandings of Yugoslav break-up and their presence in contemporaneous national discourses.

2.5. The trope of madness as rhetorical device in the discourse on post-Yugoslav nation-building

The decision to speak in terms of ‘tropes’ – essentially a rhetorical feature of language – is largely motivated by the ways in which madness features in the post-Yugoslav cinemas, where madness is often used as a vehicle to generate meanings about themes around Yugoslav break-up and the understandings of them which inform the national discourses within successor states. As with a linguistic metaphor therefore (a common trope type in language use), there is an element of transference of meaning happening which the term trope perfectly indicates. Originally drawn from the early studies of rhetoric which subsequently greatly informed 20th century literary studies, it is derived from the ancient Greek (‘turn’) for the fact that it designates a figurative use of language – a departure from the literal – and thus is applicable to a whole range of more specifically defined phenomena of language use (metaphor, metonymy, simile, synecdoche, personification, etc.). It is this departure from literal language for purposes of creating a ‘change or transference of meaning at a conceptual level’ (Macey, 2001: 385) that is connoted by the ‘turning’ aspect. Moreover, it is a device which, in some definitions, ‘implies an intellectual effort by both speaker and listener alike’ (ibid). The term is therefore a rather loose one which enables reference to a variety of complex linguistic features at the disposal of the speaker, all of which in some way create non-literal meanings at a conceptual level. In other words, tropes are one of the defining features of literary language as differentiated from language used in a legal context for example (where meaning must be extremely literal and transparent). One of the evident textual features of the films for discussion within the thesis is that, although featuring hallucinating characters, escaped lunatics or asylum settings – they are not *about* madness in a thematic sense, but rather make use of it to generate meanings related to core themes of the consequences and experiences of the Yugoslav break-up and its aftermath.

Secondly, as outlined in the preceding sections of this chapter, this study is working with a conception of film texts as intertextually related – by virtue of thematic concerns – with a variety of other text types circulating in post-Yugoslav societies and which cumulatively could be characterised as a master discourse on the recent pasts of SFRY break-up and its bearings upon present challenges, options and prerogatives for the future. Therefore, the fact that a trope is a rhetorical feature of language use (one designed to affect the thinking or perspective in the listener, either by reinforcing or undermining previous

ideas) is highly appropriate in terms of how madness is used in these films. Tropes of madness, as will become evident throughout the thesis, are equally rhetorical devices in the sense that they work to engage themes around post-Yugoslav transitions in a specific manner and to offer a clearly defined (but sometimes taboo or unpopular) perspective on these key fields of knowledge within the societies and cultures of the successor states.

Ultimately therefore, the purpose of such a focus is to describe and identify the nature of a formal feature that repeatedly occurs in the post-Yugoslav (cinematic) cultures. As Chandler (2007) writes on tropes and rhetoric:

Identifying figurative tropes in texts and practices can help to highlight underlying thematic frameworks; semiotic textual analysis sometimes involves the identification of an “overarching” (or “root”) metaphor – or “dominant trope”. (2007: 126)

This idea is akin to Foucault’s notion of an episteme as the tropological conventions that, by way of a sort of linguistic determinism, govern mental life in a particular period and place (1970: 296). It is my contention that in looking at tropes of madness, we can outline the underlying principles of thinking about post-Yugoslav break-up and consequences in these cultures and societies. The tropes of madness to be discussed within the thesis are not ubiquitous enough to warrant being considered *the* ‘overarching/root metaphor’ in terms of thinking about the experiences of the 1990s, but they do nonetheless indicate a highly prominent and significant metaphor. Chandler continues:

Ultimately, the ubiquity of tropes in visual and verbal forms can be seen as reflecting our fundamentally relational understanding of reality. Reality is framed within systems of analogy (2002: 125).

Hence the overarching objective of this study could be summarised as being to examine how tropes – which reference irrationality, perceptual disturbance, and mental instability – in post-Yugoslav cinematic culture, provide this ‘fundamentally relational understanding of [post-Yugoslav] reality’. As discussed in the introductory sections, the films in question are not ones which focus meaning-making processes on themes of mental illness or the treatment of patients (despite the fact that perhaps, at the semantic level, these post-Yugoslav films are similar to other films which do have such a focus – see the introductory sections for more on this). In fact, the films almost universally utilise madness as a device

for conceptualising other, much more general, experiences and realities and it is for this reason that the ‘transference of meaning’ aspect of the trope becomes relevant and useful.

One issue that presents itself with the approach is that in adopting the terminology of tropes in order to discuss film, we are already employing a metaphoric trope in doing so – equating film with language. Such theoretical concerns as the justifications and drawbacks of doing so would encompass a literature review of much of 20th century film theory, so I will here only expand on a couple of key aspects on this point, namely in order to illuminate what is meant by a trope in a cinematic sense as opposed to a linguistic one – and how the two might relate.

Like many ideas and concepts from linguistic and literary studies, the notion of a trope could be meaningfully transferred to screen studies methodologies only with some qualification. In particular it is important to stress that in adopting terminology which originally arose within linguistics for discussing film, we are generally re-configuring these terms somewhat and in most cases using them metaphorically. Indeed, it could be argued that the ‘linguistic turn’ in film studies essentially entailed an intellectual project whose overriding objective was to test the viability of the film-language analogy; whether it could be considered a literal, or a metaphoric connection (or perhaps neither). In hindsight, it is now unsurprising that when pushed to the limit (i.e. an insistence that the translation of the terms from linguistic to film theory achieve 100% equivalence), the analogy broke down and that it was not possible to find the cinematic equivalent of a morpheme, a syllable or a word to reference just one of the significant debates of the time. Although the work of Metz (1974) is no longer as fashionable in film studies as it was in its own time, I consider his ultimate position regarding film and language to be an effective summation of the limits of the analogy: using the framework of de Saussure’s semiotic theories, Metz concluded that film could not be considered a *langue* (in the strict sense of an actual language system) but could be considered a *langage* (meaning language in a looser sense of being a signifying practice characterised by recognisable ordering procedures (Metz, 1974: 60-84)).

Therefore, owing to the cinema’s status as a ‘compound form’ which brings together a variety of others, and thus the limitations in considering it a language in the strictest sense, we lack standardised terminology for the cinematic equivalent of the components of metaphor, synecdoche or simile (terms such as tenor and vehicle for example). The exactitude which semiotic theory was able to bring to the study of language

– in tracing the connections between form and meaning – ultimately proved elusive in film studies. However, this did not discredit the viability of various semiotic approaches to film (though it did indicate that they could not exclusively account for all aspects of how form, text, and meaning interrelate). Thus, the key variables active within the cinematic trope are somewhat different from those encountered in the purely linguistic form of literature, which deals in more straightforward relationships between signifier and signified. Here instead we are referring to certain recurrent features of narrative, setting, and cinematographic style which, working together, create an engagement with a theme (as sum of various types of knowledge about something) that involves a ‘transference of meaning’ and an ‘intellectual effort by speaker and listener alike’. In audio-visual terms, this refers to meaning making which does not only take place at the indexical dynamic of the image – but instead at the conceptual one. In a sense, one of the key properties of madness on post-Yugoslav screens is precisely that it features as a trope in this manner – creating meaning not about madness itself, but usually a range of post-Yugoslav experience in a manner which engages concurrent discourses within the successor states about how the break-up of the SFRY might be understood and explained, what this period entailed for many people, and what the early experience of the successor states might mean.

The first of the two film analysis sections which now follow will focus on using the semantic/syntactic approach to outline on a general level the narrative and aesthetic characteristics of the first significant trope of interest: the ‘inside-out asylum trope of madness’. This trope will be contextualised relative to its similarities and differences with other Yugoslav and international titles after which the discussion will continue with a close reading of the trope, across chapters 3 and 4, in three notable films in which it structures the engagement with core themes of trauma and identity. It should be noted that both the main thesis sections feature one chapter which introduces additional theoretical matter and surveys the trope at a more general level (often discussing multiple films) and a second chapter in which greater attention is given to a more detailed close analysis of one particularly significant title making use of the trope in question. Having identified the trope on a general level, analysed closely its textual deployment across these three titles, the discussion will in each case then finally return to a broader perspective summarising how such textual features ultimately engage contemporaneous discourse in successor republics around various post-Yugoslav transition experiences. The second film analysis section,

encompassing chapters 5 and 6 and focusing on what I call the ‘multiple realities trope of madness’ (which is explicitly concerned with trauma and PTSD), will commence with some additional theoretical matter concerning the relation of trauma, madness and cinema before then also following a similar structure to section 1.

Section 1: Critical perspectives on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav ideologies: the breakdown of the asylum

Chapter 3:

The inside-out asylum: Carnavalesque play and 'ideological demobilisation'

3.1. Introduction

This chapter will focus upon a trope of madness which uses the image of state institutions to introduce a critical engagement with dominant political ideologies and mobilises madness as a form of play for subverting these discourses. Coming at an early stage of the transition process for each of the republics in question in the three films to be discussed in the next two chapters, these tropes indicate the role of the cultural sphere in staging processes of semantic reconfiguration that ultimately evidence the intense ideological flux entailed by the break-up of Yugoslavia. At the textual level such tropes have their roots in various countercultural movements and can be seen in many global cinemas from the 1960's onwards, with Miloš Forman's production of Ken Kesey's novel, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (1975), being perhaps the most well known example.³² Some instances of such tropes can also be found in films produced by socialist cinemas, whether based on established literary works (such as the adaptation of a Chekhov story for the Yugoslav production of *Ward No. 6* (Pintilie, 1973)) or historical narratives – as is the case with the film, *Hospital of the Transfiguration* (Zebrowski, 1978), set during the WWII Fascist occupation of Poland.³³³⁴ Although no such tropes could be found in Soviet cinema, some examples have more recently been produced in Russia – namely *House of Fools* (Konchalovskii, 2002) and another version of the Chekhov story *Ward No. 6* (Shakhnazarov and Gornovsky, 2009). Likewise in the cases of Czech animator Švankmajer and the Hungarian director Szasz, the asylum has featured in recent work – in

³² For a comprehensive study of the asylum in American cinema, encompassing over 100 films, see the MA dissertation of Horne (2010).

³³ Further examples of the use of the asylum trope in Polish WWII themed cinema can be found in the German-Polish co-production *Wherever you are* (Zanussi, 1988), in which the asylum becomes a destination for those severely traumatised by wartime experience, and also in the Palme d'Or winning film *The Hourglass Sanatorium* (Has, 1973). The latter film constructs the asylum as a magical realist space in which the contours and consequences of individual subjective experiences and their impressions on memory, including those of WWII and the Holocaust, come to the fore.

³⁴ *Adaptatziya* (Radev, 1981) is a notable Bulgarian title from the communist period equally focused on the symbolic potential of the screen asylum and the means by which its symbolic boundaries are defined.

Lunacy (2005) and *Opium: Diary of a Madwoman* (2007) – both titles in which the asylum space functions to dramatise social transgressions that turn a questioning focus on the assumptions underlying and sustaining social norms.³⁵ At the textual level all of these works share the same basic trope of madness – one reliant upon the use of an asylum setting and narrative action focused on associated character types (doctors, guards, patients, inmates). Thematically however, these films are not primarily concerned with mental illness but with a range of local political subjects, all of which share a status as taboo or contested issues in contemporaneous ideological discourses. As Landy (2007) has written of *House of Fools*, these films do not typically focus on the conditions of living for mental patients – instead the use of the asylum and its inhabitants functions in a highly allegorical manner with the wider contemporary socio-political milieu as its subject. The primary question to which this thesis section is addressed is therefore to examine whether similar thematic preoccupations occur in the post-Yugoslav examples making use of a screen asylum and how the films’ meanings might be modified by the ‘inside-out’ component which differentiates it from other international examples discussed above. Finally, the focus will be on how the inside-out asylum trope thereby engages contested aspects of official discourses in post-Yugoslav transition contexts.

In the post-Yugoslav cinemas such tropes have been used in three highly notable productions from the previous two decades – *Burlesque Tragedy*, *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* and *Kukumi* – although always with one essential modification to the basic trope. Whereas all of the examples mentioned earlier staged the entirety (or at least the vast majority) of their action within the asylum setting, these three examples from post-Yugoslav cinemas (Serbian, Croatian, and Kosovan, respectively) all stage narratives in which those contained within the asylum make their escape, moving the action into the surrounding society. The focus on politically taboo themes however remains and it is interesting to note that, as with many of the examples mentioned above, so too the initial release and reception of these three films was also met with controversy, and some variable censorship attempts. Significant differences are also however evident with regard to the domestic audiences’ reception of the films, suggesting that the probing of taboo topics was not equally welcome or popular in each case. Furthermore, although made and released a few years apart from

³⁵ Švankmajer’s stop-motion animated *Lunacy* unfolds in an unusual temporal setting (a hybrid between 18th century France and the present) and focuses on themes of freedom and oppression and anarchy versus authoritarianism, while Szasz’s film, set in 1913, depicts a morphine addicted doctor struggling with writer’s block who enters into a relationship with a traumatised female asylum inmate.

each other, all three films were produced in a similar transition context – namely one in which political pluralism had not yet been established in the republic in question and a strong element of unofficial censorship through taboo restricted the range of cultural engagement with contemporary conditions of living.³⁶

My contention in this chapter is that these asylum-based tropes of madness provide a relatively established structure for engaging critically with politically taboo themes such as questioning wartime government policies or the repression of problematic historical narratives. In the case of the three post-Yugoslav productions which will form the focus of this thesis section, these taboo themes are those of questioning ongoing conflict as official government policy in Serbia in the early 1990s, a re-positioning of the memories and practices of the socialist period in Croatia in the same decade, and a critical perspective on Kosovo Albanian nationalism and nation-building in what was ironically the first feature film made in the fledgling state after it became a UN Protectorate in 1999, setting in motion the protracted route to the declaration of independence from Serbia that came in 2008. The modification in the trope – that the madness at some point escapes from within the confines of the asylum – is one which allows these films to also combine elements of other genres and narratives common in post-socialist and post-Yugoslav cinemas – such as the ‘road movie’ which, as various critics have previously discussed, can be especially useful in exploring themes around various nation-building projects in the post-socialist context (Vidan, 2011; Georgescu, 2012; Dickenson, 2010) and will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4 with a detailed close reading of *Kukumi*’s inside-out asylum trope. Ultimately however, the fundamental mechanism for engaging with the films’ primary themes (aforementioned political taboos) is by virtue of a carnivalesque play with the ideologically loaded symbols and social practices which are found both in the films in question here – and in the many broader political and social discourses in the successor states. This play with symbols and gestures is reliant upon the narrative pretexts provided by the ‘inside-out’ asylum trope – which is how I will hereafter refer to this post-Yugoslav modification of the asylum-based trope of madness. As will be made evident throughout the subsequent

³⁶ More specifically, these contexts refer to war-time Serbia in 1994 when Milošević’s regime sought to maximise its control over media and culture in order to maintain domestic support for conflict policies; Croatia under Tudjman in the late 1990s when – despite four years of post-war independence – many democratic changes had yet to be implemented, particularly with regard to media and press freedom; and finally, Kosovo in 2005 when Kosovo-Albanian political leaders were seeking to maximise the power of nationalist rhetoric in the build-up to the declaration of independence from Serbia which eventually came in 2008.

analysis, this ‘inversion’ of the asylum is the spatial precursor to an ideological ‘inversion’ which results from the interactions ensuing between the escaped patients and inmates and the post-Yugoslav societies in transition and crisis that they encounter around them. The inside-out aspect of the trope is therefore crucially more than a mere spatial transition occurring at the level of narrative (from inside to outside). It also entails a crucial carnivalesque breakdown in established value hierarchies facilitated by releasing the uncertainties of madness from the asylum confines into the surrounding society.

The chapter will therefore draw on the discussion presented in the previous methodology chapter on how film as a narrative audio-visual medium can produce meaning around nation and nationality, outlining – first at a brief and general level (with a more detailed example to follow in the next chapter) – how the asylum-based trope of madness works to thematise certain taboo aspects of national discourse. Subsequently, the textual analysis will focus specifically on the mechanisms of the films’ semiotic play with ideologically-loaded verbal, iconic and performative symbols present in the post-Yugoslav political and cultural landscape in Serbia, Croatia and Kosovo respectively. The inside-out asylum trope will thereby be shown to function in a carnivalesque manner according roughly to the principles defined by Bakhtin’s study of Rabelais (1982, 1984). The key questions for the chapter will therefore be:

- What characterises the asylum-based trope of madness at the level of film semiotics and narrative? Which types of themes do these films typically explore?
- What is specific (and what is not) about the post-Yugoslav examples of the inside-out asylum trope?
- What does the use of the trope suggest about cinematic/cultural engagements with political ideologies and dominant social discourses in the specific post-Yugoslav successor societies in question?

The analysis will demonstrate that such a trope generally functions as a form of ‘ideological demobilisation’³⁷ for which the semantic destabilising capacity of madness is essential. These films can thereby be considered within the context of a cultural effort to

³⁷ This term is taken from the work of Sretenović (2003) on post-Yugoslav culture in which he attributes this lack of ‘ideological demobilisation’, arising often from the fact that there was a high level of consistency with regard to the personnel in power both before and after the break-up, as being one of the reasons why the break-up of Yugoslavia entailed a series of bloody conflicts – unlike in most other instances of post-socialist transitions during the 1990s.

reduce and *dispel* the excessive ideological potency of certain symbols and spaces found in various national discourses throughout differing moments of post-Yugoslav transitions.

3.2. What characterises the asylum-based trope of madness?

I have chosen to group these films around the notion of an ‘asylum-based trope of madness’ in order to indicate the significance of the asylum setting for considering how the films’ ‘flagging’ or ‘thematizing’ processes might work. In all cases this setting is characterised by two fundamental aspects – it is finite in space with clearly defined boundaries (high gates, fences, walls, etc.) and those found within its confines are very clearly demarcated as belonging to one of two groups, the keepers and the kept (with various sub-divisions available within each category).

We can therefore say that the spatial arrangement of the trope is highly constitutive – the various borders and boundaries of the asylum space are all ultimately indicating a binaristic division between inside and outside, at both physical and symbolic levels. This spatial element is key also in the division of characters into the two groups mentioned above – at the most basic level, the keepers are those who can freely move spatially from inside to outside, and vice versa. The kept are, by definition, those who are restricted to the inside and whose movement outside is only permissible if sanctioned by the keepers or otherwise if they manage to violate the rules in some way.

The narratives found in films which employ such tropes typically structure conflict either between the two character groups or within the keeper group. In *Ward No. 6* (both the 1973 Yugoslav production and the 2009 Russian one) the master narrative involves the change in status of Dr. Ragin from the keeper category to the kept, mainly resulting from conflicts between him and his peers within the keeper group.³⁸ *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* instead stages within its master narrative a conflict between the two groups, and particularly their respective ‘leaders’ – McMurphy and Nurse Ratched. Ultimately the former is unable to bring about a change in status of his group, while the latter successfully maintains that of hers. However, one character, Chief Bromden, succeeds in violating the boundary which confines him and manages to escape his individual position as one of the kept. The narrative of the Polish *Hospital of Transfiguration* concerns a struggle between

³⁸ A related narrative dynamic is in evidence in Szasz’s aforementioned *Opium: Diary of a Madwoman* – in which a doctor and a patient forge a stronger and more understanding bond than they can manage with members of their own ‘group’ in terms of asylum status.

current keepers attempting to resist takeover from a new external group of keepers (i.e. the Fascist occupiers of Poland who are pursuing extermination of the kept as an official state policy and assume control of the asylum from the Polish authorities).³⁹ This is thus a very basic and general overview of some of the semantic (asylum setting, characters divided into keepers and kept) and syntactic (conflict between or within groups as main narrative event) characteristics of the trope – evident across films produced in various cultures. In order to elaborate further on what constitutes this trope it is now necessary to consider exactly what role the concept of madness plays within it.

This asylum-based trope draws on the notions of madness developed – particularly within the vastly influential ‘anti-psychiatry’ work of writers such as Laing (1960), Szasz (1987) and Foucault (1967) – around the same time as the films mentioned above were being produced. The fundamental concern of this diverse group of writers lay with an analysis of madness and power, particularly within the post-WWII contexts of ever increasing medicalisation of notions of madness and the shift towards a discourse of mental illness. While not denying the reality of mental illness, as has sometimes been understood, these works sought to explore the enduring oppression resulting from such developments despite the apparent ideological neutrality of medical and scientific discourses which constructed mental illness as a new object of knowledge.

Institutions such as asylums, or the mental health facilities which succeeded them, were a specific focus of attention for reasons of making most evident that – even with the more enlightened medicalisation of madness – various repressive practices persisted, ranging from the involuntary restraint, confinement, and treatment of patients to their social stigmatisation. Such phenomena had been in evidence in previous centuries too but, as Foucault argued, they took on new forms in the wake of the post-WWII growth of psychiatry resulting from the spread of psychoanalytic theories combined with the growing status and power of scientific discourses. Ultimately, even though disagreements and inconsistencies are present when viewed as a cohesive body of work, the ‘anti-psychiatrist’ writings sought to posit that various additional factors were still highly active within definitions of mental illness, despite the introduction of this supposedly more medical, and ideologically neutral, term. Particularly central were socially variable considerations such as moral judgments and prejudice derived from an application of various knowledge

³⁹ Švankmajer’s *Lunacy* is another example in which conflict between those in charge of the asylum (as to how it should be run) is a major narrative preoccupation.

frameworks for understanding the relation between the individual human being and the collective (whether religious morality or Darwinism for example).

Central to these conceptualisations of madness, mental illness, and the function of the asylum is a critical engagement with the varied, and often subtle, forms of power which structure this relation between the individual and the social collective. Although concerned also with certain obviously direct tools and practices of repression (e.g. the use of mandatory EST), anti-psychiatry writers⁴⁰ primary focus with regard to their contemporary societies was in examining some of the less obvious forms of ideological restraint which they saw manifested through the emergent discourse on mental illness. Ultimately therefore the result was an effort to complicate the prevailing image of ideological neutrality attributed to the discourse of mental illness, by examining its intersections with various other dominant ideological discourses (religious, political etc.) and highlighting the attendant repressive consequences. In other words, the new discourse of mental illness which sought to establish a clinical scientific category nonetheless retained much of the socio-culturally variable aspects of madness, especially in its early years.

It is thus precisely in this regard that we might say that, when explored in more detail, the asylum-based trope of madness in question here (with cinematic origins in the late 1960's and 1970s – but current even today)⁴¹ draws precisely on the conceptualisation of madness, mental illness, and the institution of the asylum as it is found in the work of the aforementioned writers. This is true both in the sense of the general arrangement of the trope (for example the power hierarchies which are established between different character groups of keepers and kept at the level of general narrative structure) and the more specific thematic focus of each individual film (which varies locally but nonetheless can almost always be considered as an example of critical perspective on a taboo aspect of various dominant ideologies). In light of this, we can now return to the semantic/syntactic analysis of the general asylum-based trope of madness in order to more precisely define it.

Therefore, the asylum-based trope features an essential spatial aspect (binaristic division of inside and outside) and also a characterisation in which all characters fall within

⁴⁰ It should be noted that some of these writers, Foucault especially, were not happy with the reductive implication of being herded together under this umbrella term. It did nonetheless serve as a useful shorthand for summarising some core shared ideas and for that reason I have also employed it in this section.

⁴¹ Horne (2010) has detailed a history of the screen asylum that extends throughout the entirety of the history of cinema – from 1904 to 2010, and counting. However, he acknowledges that the post WWII period constituted a major cycle of such films (2010: 54)

two broad groups – defined by their relation to the spatial boundary – of keepers and kept. Narrative action is consequently structured as a series of conflicts either within or between groups, but always with consequences for the status of this relation. More specifically, those falling within the category of keepers (who may move freely across the central spatial boundary) are usually characterised as medical professionals whose authority derives from their command of scientific knowledge and their support by state instruments of coercion and force (military, police, asylum guards). These characters in various ways assume responsibility for the kept – who are characterised as a diverse mix of socially marginalised figures – whether physically disabled, mentally ill, or simply different from mainstream notions of appropriate behaviour, dress, or speech. Their diversity in this respect is also indicative of a Foucauldian perspective on madness, encompassing not only those whose difference lies in being merely biological, but also many of those whose difference is much harder to quantify and might instead be better described as social; a broader deviation from certain social norms of lifestyle.

These semantic/syntactic characteristics of the asylum-based trope therefore render it particularly suited to certain types of themes. In the use of a binaristic – but crucially unstable – division of characters into two groups, the trope offers an ideal structure for exploring notions of individual and collective identities, especially in political terms through the focusing of narrative action on conflict within and between the two groups. The fact that belonging to either group immediately impacts on a characters' social status (or in narratological terms, their capacity for narrative agency) means that the trope is fundamentally also one which is suited to exploring themes of inequality and power hierarchies. Finally, the fact that all types of characterisation found within the trope also entail a relation to the specific power of the state via the asylum institution (either as its agent or its subject) means that the third precision we could make about the trope is that it is suited to introducing the (nation-) state within the exploration of these aforementioned themes.

The various examples of the asylum-based trope of madness mentioned previously in the chapter all make use of this core dynamic – configured, in terms of its details, so as to focus specifically on a variety of local themes. In Konchalovskii's *House of Fools* for example, the spatial boundary between inside and outside the asylum is reconfigured also by the background context of the Chechen war which rages all around the asylum. The

asylum boundaries thereby also signify the boundary between warzone and a sanctuary from it. Because the asylum-based trope attributes narrative significance to the aforementioned binaristic spatial arrangement – and because characterisation is strongly linked to it, we can therefore say that the alignment of this border with the edge of the Chechen warzone also serves a ‘flagging’ function to use Hjort’s terminology introduced in the previous chapter. The standard and generic features of the asylum-based trope (inside/outside spatial configuration which is given narrative significance) are thus adapted here to also introduce a specific and local theme – that of the first Chechen war. The details of exactly how this ‘thematization’ interacts intertextually with other texts and discourses (in other words, what the film ‘says’ about the Chechen war) is then evident from a closer analysis of various further considerations such as narrative sequencing, characterisation, and so on.

Likewise, in *Hospital of Transfiguration*, the characterisation of the various keepers (according to national identifications) – engaged in conflict with each other about how to define their responsibilities for the kept – works to introduce nation as a general theme and the legacy of WWII for Polish national identity discourse as a specific one. The current keepers of the asylum (Polish authorities) are aware of the impending arrival of the German Fascist forces who will soon assume control of it, effectively forcing the current keepers into a decision between becoming one of the kept or taking one of the re-configured (incorporating Fascist extermination policies) keeper roles. Again, a general feature of the trope (here, narrative action focusing upon conflict between characters in the keeper function – about how to approach their roles) is configured in a specific way in order to thematise sensitive and contested issues around the events of WWII and the ways in which the actions of Polish authorities might affect understandings of national history. All of the titles mentioned throughout this chapter provide similar examples with regard to the asylum-based trope of madness and engagement with contested aspects of discourses around nation and their political implications in contemporaneous contexts.

Hence it is evident that the asylum-based trope of madness is a general trope incorporating certain semantic and syntactic features, which have generally been used flexibly to explore a variety of themes – local and specific to each production. Nonetheless, all of the themes which emerge from the films’ ‘flagging’ functions are ones which focus on the use and abuse of power within political discourses and spheres of action. With this

overview of asylum-based tropes now established, it is worth turning specifically to the post-Yugoslav films of interest in this chapter in order to consider firstly how the ‘inside-out asylum’ trope modifies certain conventions of the asylum-based trope and, secondly, which themes emerge from these films’ various ‘flagging’ techniques.

The post-Yugoslav feature titles in question in this chapter are those of *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Marshall Tito’s Spirit*, while the next chapter will provide a close reading of *Kukumi* with additional attention paid to its use of road movie conventions relative to the inside-out asylum. All three of these films posit in one way or another a reconfiguration of the asylum-based trope discussed above, in that in all cases the narrative focuses upon a failure of confinement – a breakdown of the inside/outside spatial boundary – which effectively means that the characters comprising those who are kept inside are able to escape and explore the world outside. Semantically, many of the same elements are present (asylum settings, characters initially divided into keepers and kept) but there is a crucial syntactic distinction with these films – the narrative provides a pretext for the breakdown of the symbolic spatial division of inside/outside, which means that the majority of the narrative action occurs in the outside space. Moreover, this narrative pre-text is always one related to various events of Yugoslav break-up – in *Burlesque Tragedy* the hospital literally ceases to function due to the crippling consequences of international trade sanctions imposed on Serbia during the conflicts (so that it becomes more of an asylum, working only to confine). The desperation arising from this lack of resources is what causes the doctor to lead his patients into the outside world. Meanwhile, in *Kukumi* the gates of the asylum are literally left open by the Serbian police guards when, after hearing of Milošević’s surrender to NATO in 1999, they decide to flee Kosovo and return to Serbia.

Following the breakdown of this spatial boundary between inside and outside (which happens at various points within these three films but always within the first half of the film), the trope then gets reconfigured into something which resembles the earlier asylum-based trope – but with the crucial distinction that, with the loss of the constitutive spatial boundary, there comes a loosening of the boundaries between the groups of characters in question. In particular, the (former) kept now roam the society outside and are freed from the relation with the former keepers – now instead placed in a new relation with those encountered on the outside. As a result, all three of the films stage a series of encounters between those who were formerly kept – and those that are encountered on the

outside. As with the earlier asylum-based trope, narrative action focuses upon encounters and interaction between the two character groups/types. The crucial difference therefore between these post-Yugoslav ‘inside out asylum’ tropes and the aforementioned ‘asylum-based’ ones is that the former create the effect of an ‘open film’ while the latter establish a ‘closed film’. Braudy (1984) has defined ‘closed film’ as one in which ‘the world of the film is the only thing which exists’ (1984: 46). As Horne has identified (2010: 31), most asylum-based tropes serve to establish a ‘closed film’ effect. The post-Yugoslav variants on the trope do the opposite – with the breakdown of the spatial boundary they create an ‘open film’ effect, stressing the continuous presence of a world beyond the individual frame or asylum. This is a key distinction in enabling them to increase their level of thematic engagement with their contemporary societies of production; in other words – to function more effectively as allegory whereby the meanings and effects occurring within the film’s diegetic space are even more readily ‘portable’ for transfer to the wider external contexts.

More specifically, it is my contention that the inside-out asylum trope in these three post-Yugoslav films can be understood primarily as one in which a constitutive element is a form of carnivalesque engagement with various symbols central to dominant political discourses, in a manner which subverts their ideological content and potency. This engagement also extends to the ‘outside’ spaces, encountered by the former kept following the breakdown of the spatial boundary, insofar as these spaces are also ideologically loaded within the context of political discourses – in particular those related to nation and geo-cultural identifications (this aspect will be considered in the next chapter). As will be elaborated upon further, all three films were produced and released in particularly exceptional political circumstances with regard to the instabilities of post-Yugoslav transition, whether during war-time and sanctions in Serbia (*Burlesque Tragedy*), Croatia’s belated post-socialist transition with the illness and eventual death of President Franjo Tudjman (*Marshall Tito’s Spirit*), or the build-up to Kosovan independence (*Kukumi*).⁴² Hence the next section will outline how, at the audio-visual aesthetic and narrative level, these films make use of the semantic instability of madness in order to engage with

⁴² As has been noted elsewhere, the post-Yugoslav transitions – measured in terms of a variety of political, social and economic reforms – began at different points in each of the successor republics so that in some cases, although officially the SFRY was no more, some of its institutions and state infrastructure persisted unchanged for a number of years after the break-up began in earnest in 1991. Hence it is feasible to say, as Daković does (2004), that for example Serbia’s post-socialist transition only really began in 2000. It is for this reason that I consider the three films discussed in this thesis section to have comparative contexts of release – despite being made in 1994, 1999 and 2004, respectively.

ideologically loaded visual and textual symbols from their contemporaneous political and national discourses. The final sections of the chapter will then return to the notion of carnivalesque, comparing the Rabelaisian understanding as described by Bakhtin, where carnival is a public violation of social norms by privileged figures whose transgression is not only permitted but sanctioned, with the one found in the inside-out asylum trope – where transgression tends to be a much more troublesome venture, enacted not by jesters and fools, but the former asylum patients.

3.3. Madness and the semantic disarming of the politicised symbol

Madness, in other words (like literature), consists neither in sense or non-sense: it is not a final *signified* – however missing or disseminated – nor an ultimate *signifier* that resists exhaustive deciphering; it is rather, I would suggest, a kind of *rhythm*; a rhythm that is unpredictable, incalculable, unsayable, but that is nonetheless fundamentally narratable as the story of slippage of a reading *between* the excessive fullness and the excessive emptiness of meaning. (Felman, 1985: 254)

3.3.1. ‘War is madness’ – in a Balkan way: The re-configurations of established local tropes in *Burlesque Tragedy* (Marković, 1994)

Even prior to the conflict which brought Yugoslavia (and some of its filmmakers) to increased global prominence, Goran Marković was an established figure in both the domestic and international cultural sphere. Born to well-known acting parents, Rade and Olivera Marković (the latter of whom also stars in *Burlesque Tragedy*), he graduated from the Prague Film and Television School (FAMU) as part of a talented generation of Yugoslav filmmakers (including Emir Kusturica and Rajko Grlić) and, like many of this group, went on to enjoy both domestic and international success with his TV and feature work. Beginning with his debut feature, *Special Education* (1976), Marković immediately proved both his technical proficiency and the potential of his films to do well at the box office and with critics and festival juries. He cemented his status as a leading talent of Yugoslav cinematography with five further features throughout the 1970s and 1980s. His 1992 film *Tito and Me*, a satirical comedy in which a twelve-year-old member of the ‘Pioneers’ (Party-run youth scouting organisation) develops an odd infatuation with Tito, much to the embarrassment of his family, is often held to be the last film to have been made in Yugoslavia. Despite being released after the commencement of conflict in Croatia, *Tito and Me* was produced prior to the outbreak of war, and thus now seems perhaps

incongruous with its contexts of release in being a slightly Yugo-nostalgic comedy, released at the beginning of a bloody period of war.

However, with his next feature project Marković seemed keen to engage, in some way at least, with the events unfolding in the country around him. He had repeatedly discussed the subject of responsibility for the violence and destruction of the 1990s in his many interviews up until that point – and would continue to do so throughout subsequent decades. Whether at the Montreal film festival (where he has frequently premiered his work and won awards – including for *Burlesque Tragedy*), or in domestic Serbian press (he refused to leave Belgrade throughout the various troubles), Marković has frequently discussed the artist's ethical dilemma during the period of the 1990s and particularly the feeling of impotence to influence events around him. This frustration and dilemma clearly dominates his own perspective on his work and life during this period, and is worth introducing to the discussion of *Burlesque Tragedy* precisely because it invites the reading of the film as a response to its socio-political contexts of production.

The film is a French-Bulgarian co-production, owing largely to Marković's disdain for the state-owned Radio-TV Serbia (at least in the Milošević period – in subsequent years he has worked with RTS, as with his 2002 film *The Cordon*), meaning he was forced to look abroad for production funds since domestic private sources were largely non-existent. A few years later he was to summarise his position with the following words: "To be able to shoot in Serbia, you have to work in some way or another with Serbian television [RTS] which represents the essential wheels of the system and which, ten years ago with its outrageous nationalism, had prepared minds for the war" (Semo, 2000). However, helped no doubt by his awards festival success with *Tito and Me*, Marković instead secured the majority of his budget from French and Bulgarian production companies,⁴³ and opted to shoot in Sofia, since the ongoing conflict made Yugoslav-era production centres (mainly Belgrade and Zagreb) unworkable. Marković thereby became one of the first filmmakers to be able to make a feature film during the conflict, as a result of his international reputation and track record (thus opening up international funding) and the proximity of a nearby affordable production centre in Sofia. Having overcome the practical challenge to production posed by the crisis, Marković then had to negotiate the much more complex issue of its ethical challenge for the artist/filmmaker.

⁴³ In total, seven companies participated in funding and producing the film (five French and two Bulgarian).

The plot of *Burlesque Tragedy* is adapted by screenwriter Dušan Kovačević from a play of his by the same name. The action unfolds over the course of a single day and night in Belgrade, sometime during the wars of '91-'95 and involves two groups of characters whose narratives unfold simultaneously before coming together towards the end of the film – a psychiatric doctor of a dilapidated mental hospital with his hapless patients and, secondly, a playwright and his family, related to one of the patients. The action begins with the doctor's insistence on abandoning the inadequate asylum, crippled by the lack of supplies during the international sanctions which accompanied the conflict, and travelling across town with his patients to seek renewed support from various indifferent authorities. Everywhere rejected and abused, the doctor decides that he can only return the patients to their families. Hence they ultimately arrive at the house of the playwright, Milan, in the hope that he can persuade him to accept responsibility for the care of Milan's father, Vasilije, a former head of communist secret police and now mental patient. Over the course of this journey from the asylum to Milan's house, the accompanying patients engage in various escapades, from staging a wedding inside a department store (for Vasilije and another patient, Rajna) to causing havoc on the city's public transport system. Meanwhile, Milan's family is also hosting his drunk and violent brother, Kosta, and his wife, Julka, for the evening, initially unaware of the asylum patients heading their way. When the two groups are finally joined, they spend a few hours reflecting (often in violent disagreement) on family histories and relationships before the party is disbanded by the police.

Having outlined some of the film's contexts of production and synoptic matter, the discussion will move to some of its formal components and particularly the ways in which madness functions to engage socio-political realities of the early 1990s as a process of semantic destabilisation with regard to various ideologically loaded symbols prominent in contemporaneous political discourses.

At the textual level therefore, *Burlesque Tragedy* offers an early example of the inside-out asylum trope in post-Yugoslav cinema. As described in the synopsis, the film opens upon a dilapidated mental institution inhabited by a doctor and his patients. However, owing to the desperation wrought by the climate of war and sanctions, the doctor decides to abandon the asylum and take his patients with him in a bid to find some alternative method of housing and caring for them. Thus the narrative pretext for the transition from inside (the asylum) to outside is provided by the invocation of

contemporary contexts (war/sanctions) in bringing about this breakdown of the spatial boundary. What follows is a series of encounters between the doctor and his patients – and the people and environments they encounter on the outside. What is interesting here, with regard to the other titles also discussed in this chapter, is that the film contains numerous instances of carnivalesque play with certain cultural practices – which had become excessively ideologically contaminated with contemporary wartime political discourses. In other words, madness – as a process of semantic destabilisation – is applied to various aspects of contemporary wartime reality in early 1990s Belgrade. I will provide three examples of this engagement with such cultural practices and spheres – related to the turbo-folk musical genre, wedding customs and their representation, and national sports, namely, basketball.

The patients in *Burlesque Tragedy* function in a chameleon-like fashion, often mimicking in their own way various recognisable cultural practices that they encounter. Since these cultural practices are ones which possessed an excessive ideological connotation owing to association with discourses of national identity, the effect of seeing them re-configured here by the asylum inmates is one of estrangement or alienating defamiliarisation, as theorised by much of Brecht's writing and practice in the theatre (1970), and also Russian Formalist thinking of Schlovsky (1973) in particular. In other words, the fundamental 'otherness' of the escaped patients limits the capacity for identification with them – which is partial and inconsistent throughout the film due to other stylistic and narrative features also – thus functioning as a distancing or alienating effect (following Brecht's theorising of a formal device which obstructs audience identification thereby facilitating a greater degree of critical distance in relation to the text/performance). When combined with the patients' re-imagining of ideologically-loaded speech, gesture and other cultural practices the ultimate effect is one of Shklovsky-ian 'estrangement' – a de-naturalisation of that which had become invisible through repetition and habit.

For example, the musical performance of Violeta, one of the female patients, at the wedding of Vasilije and Rajna (which takes place inside a city centre department store after the patients have abandoned their asylum), directly mimics the performative conventions of the 'turbo-folk' musical genre – especially popular among Serbian nationalists at the time (but which exists even today in various incarnations also in Bulgaria and Macedonia for example). Most notorious of such artists was Svetlana Ražnatović, known by her stage

name, Ceca, who was also the wife of Serbian paramilitary leader (later ICTY indictee) Arkan (this marriage was just one reason for the connections between turbo-folk and a certain political cadre). The musical genre was characterised by scantily-clad, buxom young singers, performing songs with traditional folk motifs and lyrics overlaid to a more modern disco club backing track (hence the ‘turbo’ element). The use of native languages for vocals and a lyrical focus on rural life and local customs rendered the musical genre very relevant to contemporary national identity discourses. Whether implicitly or explicitly, many of the most popular examples of the genre evidenced a nationalistic ideological character, which often literally provided a soundtrack to the ongoing conflicts (Kronja, 2004). Thus Violeta’s unwitting aping of these conventions (she dresses herself in a trashy, garish and revealing dress in order to perform the song) offers a glimpse of the contemporary Ceca/turbo-folk phenomenon in a rather more pathetic and tragic light than the glorious spectacles which were popular on television and in concert halls at the time. Her lover, Joja, at this point remarks that she is ‘nothing special after all’ and thus the audience is invited to consider this perspective on a significant dynamic at work within Serbian culture, here re-configured and delivered in a malfunctioning capacity by the hands of the asylum patients.



Fig. 3.1. Violeta’s musical performances in *Burlesque Tragedy* (Marković, 1995)



Fig. 3.2. Serbian turbo-folk star Ceca and wartime paramilitary Arkan.

A second example of the dynamic can be seen by considering the staging within which the musical performance takes place – that of a wedding ceremony for two asylum patients. Again, what may seem to be only a background detail is instead rendered highly suggestive owing to the rich intertextual associations invoked by the wedding set-piece. These intertextual effects may be difficult to map comprehensively, but we can nonetheless convincingly state that the centrality of such wedding scenes within both Balkan cultures and cinemas is evident perhaps by the fact that Emir Kusturica’s films – trading for many years on a notion of Balkan ‘authenticity’ – for instance almost *always* feature extended wedding scenes, around which many of the key plot developments are structured (a website devoted to the director even features an entire section focused solely on such scenes).⁴⁴

Marković’s wedding scene in *Burlesque Tragedy* contains many of the features of those commonly found in the dominant domestic cinematic discourses (such as the films of Kusturica) on the definitive aspects of the Balkans – and yet the scene is strangely awkward, taking place as it does on the upper floor of an under-stocked department store during sanctions and featuring nurses confiscating alcohol rather than waiters serving it. Thus what gives Marković’s wedding scene in *Burlesque Tragedy* its power is the fact that, reconfigured as it is by the escaped patients, the social ritual is clearly in some way incomplete. The traditional wedding scene of excess, plenty and unbridled *jouissance* – as it is often represented on screen in Kusturica’s films (see screenshots in Fig. 3.3) – is intertextually evoked by the escaped patients but is also juxtaposed with another picture, recalling the contemporary conditions of living in wartime Belgrade under economic sanctions, which fills the incomplete gaps in the patients’ performance; in other words, Marković’s wedding also features a long table, some sort of musical performance and a

⁴⁴ See <http://www.kustu.com/w2/en:weddings>.

table covered in glasses and plates – but, crucially, no food and very little actual celebration. This is the nature of Marković’s challenge to his audience; which wedding scene will they choose to see – the mythologised and seductive fantasy of the Balkan space as a site of life-affirming pleasure or something much more sobering; a group of psychologically damaged people sitting around an empty table inside a department store where they can afford none of the few items which are on offer. While the sequence initially invites recognition of the former image, after the cessation of Violeta’s musical performance and the confiscation of the alcohol, it is the latter image that slowly comes into focus. Madness, in Marković’s film, is therefore a vision of social life as a performance – executed by those who have not fully or correctly absorbed certain dominant principles – and which thus invites, by virtue of their awkward performances which fail to embody the full range of meanings normally attached to them, consideration from a different perspective. Since popular culture in Milošević’s Serbia in the early 1990s was so successful in diverting attention away from the material price which was paid for the indulgence of nationalist ideologies, Marković here stages a breakdown of such a process whereby the identity fantasies supported in this pop music/turbo folk or visual culture *fail* to achieve their seductive desired effect, and instead prompt a re-evaluation of how their manipulative workings might better be understood and even resisted.



Fig. 3.3. Kusturica’s wedding scenes: *When Father was Away on Business* (1985), *Black Cat White Cat* (1998), *Underground* (1995), and *Promise me this*, (2007) – a watermark of authenticity for ‘Balkan’ cinema.

One final example of these techniques in Marković's film can be seen with the characterisation of Joja, a patient who aspires to play basketball in the American NBA – inspired by real life star of Yugoslav basketball and LA Laker, Vlade Divac (whom, Joja imagines, is his friend). Again, the simple image of Joja engaged in basketball practice is perhaps seemingly inconsequential to a foreign audience, or even a younger contemporary Serbian one now – but by virtue of the fact that the Yugoslav national team was, in the 1980s and early 1990s, the most successful in the world (various gold medals, World and European cups) the image of a hapless Joja bouncing his ball becomes more potent. Indeed, prior to the outbreak of the war it could be argued that its basketball team was one of the most internationally well-known aspects of Yugoslavia, and thus it constituted a core component of Yugoslav identity in this period. At one point in the film, Joja and his 'manager' (another of the patients) discuss the reputation of Yugoslavs abroad, all the while framing their discussion in basketball terms – in other words, the basketball team and their image seems to stand for Yugoslavia as a whole. The mad wannabe NBA star Joja, with his deluded belief that he might escape his daily reality into the glamour of the NBA thus represents an image of a damaged, impotent and waning Yugoslav ideal. Indeed, no metaphorical jump is required to connect the organisation of the Yugoslav basketball team with the fate of Yugoslavia as a whole since, during this period, national sporting activities – perhaps unsurprisingly – became a forum in which political frictions and struggles were played out (whether players chose to play for the Yugoslav, or the newly formed Croat team for example), and which provided yet another example of a cultural sphere taking on new ideological and symbolic dimensions owing to its intertextual intersection with discourses of national identity.

Again, mapping these intertextual dynamics comprehensively is impossible – but it is nonetheless feasible to give an illustrative example. In a high-profile episode, two of Yugoslavia's most successful and iconic basketball players, Vlade Divac and Dražen Petrović, who prior to the war were very close friends, saw their relationship completely break down after an incident in which Divac, a Serb, confiscated a Croatian flag from a Croat nationalist supporting the Yugoslav team in 1990. Divac thereby became a 'Chetnik' as the incident was analysed and debated in the media both in Serbia and Croatia, and the player was thus shunned by his Croatian teammates in the national team – including

Petrović.⁴⁵ Thus there can be no doubt that various national sports came to represent, by the early 1990s, a site of leisure practice wherein the political future – and historical past – of Yugoslavia and its republics was directly and openly debated and confronted. Hence the aforementioned episode involving Vlade Divac and Dražen Petrović, in which an incident at a basketball match was endlessly debated and discussed only in terms of the war. Both players thereby unmistakably came to represent symbols of how (ethno-) political divisions can intrude into other spheres of life, even despite the fact neither player was even living in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.⁴⁶



Fig. 3.4. Basketball and fantasies of escape in *Burlesque Tragedy* (Marković, 1995)

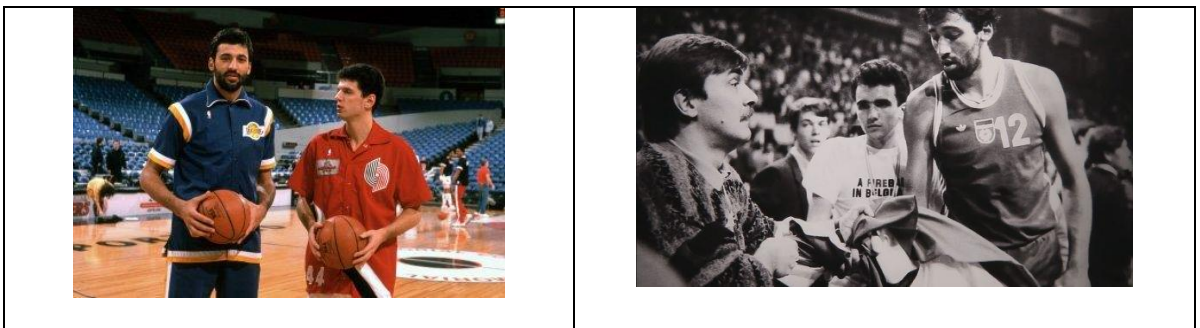


Fig. 3.5. Vlade Divac and Dražen Petrović in *Once Brothers* (Tolajian, 2010) and the ‘flag confiscation’ incident⁴⁷

To return to *Burlesque Tragedy* then, it is thus essential to emphasise the exceptional relevance of national sports – and basketball especially – to political debates and discourses on Yugoslavia and the break-up. It is for this reason that Divac is frequently

⁴⁵ See the recent ESPN sports documentary *Once Brothers* (Tolajian, 2010) for Divac’s personal account of this period.

⁴⁶ Other examples of the ‘hijacking’ of sporting activities by nationalist elements could be seen also in football matches between Dynamo Zagreb and Red Star Belgrade, which often resulted in bloody riots – most notoriously in 1990 in which over 60 people were wounded.

⁴⁷ See also the Slovenian film, *Idle Running* (Burger, 1999), for another example of the use of basketball imagery and metaphors within the context of questioning and exploring discourses of the Slovenian nation, Yugoslav identities and so on.

mentioned by name within the film – as a means of opening up this connotation of national sport and the ways in which political discourses intersected upon it, sometimes with tragic consequences for individual relationships and careers. It is this intertextual phenomenon which gives the basketball-obsessed character of Joja his symbolic potency in introducing national identity as a theme within the film. Again, as with the previous examples discussed, this basketball motif represents a re-configuration of a central feature of Serbian popular culture in the 1990s – executed once more by the confused and deluded patients in such a way as to probe at its ideological content relative to the surrounding contexts. The obvious question is: how likely is it that Joja will actually be able to follow in Vlade Divac's footsteps and escape from the painful circumstances of the Yugoslav conflicts in the early 1990s by joining the NBA? The answer is, of course, extremely unlikely, meaning that once again we have an image of the escaped patients as those who attempt to occupy a social position or engage in a cultural practice where their failure works as a means to highlight the ideological structure of such practices relative to the background contexts of war and sanctions, which intrude into every scene.

One final point is worth making with regard to the use of intertextual dynamics within Marković's film: the 'maddening' of common pop cultural images and practices of Yugoslav identity extends also to casting and the manner in which actors' on and off screen identities are utilised within his tropes of madness, much in the same way that the Vlade Divac references work. I wish now to explore this final aspect of Marković's engagement of madness with cultural images and practices which, in the context of the 1990s, took on additional symbolic relevance to discourses on shared political pasts and increasingly separate (along ethno-national lines) futures. This can be summarised with reference to what Pogačar (2010) has referred to as the 'Yu-niverse' – the specifics of a Yugoslav cultural space, idiosyncratically defined for many years by its relative isolation from larger entities of both 'East' and 'West', especially during the 1970s and 1980s.

Pogačar discusses a form of 'interfilmic referentiality' which shares many characteristics, such as typecasting, with similar dynamics at work within Hollywood for instance – while highlighting that 'the difference, when compared to Yugoslavia, is [Hollywood's] global effect, while the [Yugoslav variant] only functioned in this rather limited territory of the former Yugoslavia, and significantly contributed to the creation of the *Yuniverse*'. Nonetheless, the consequences of the practice were similar – 'a character

does not only inhabit the cinematic dimensions of one film, but establishes an interfilmic “persona”, which is built on references (not necessarily direct) to other filmic and TV texts’ (2010: 200). Pogačar summarises the effect thus:

The predominant aspect of any interfilmic referentiality, and of the Yugoslav one, is that the faces of ever-present characters do not inhabit one filmestrial space exclusively, but rather ‘migrate’ from one to another. They co-exist in multiple fictional universes contributing to a common, trans-filmic symbolic universe to emerge... In a certain historical period it functions as the common field of cultural experience... (2010: 208).

What makes *Burlesque Tragedy* stand out in this respect however, are two nuances which come into play within this aspect of the film. Firstly, Marković’s film boasts a particularly extensive ensemble of such instantly-recognisable faces – many of the actors are among the most prolific and successful Yugoslav-era actors (from various republics). Hence, the film has something of the air of an industry statement (where else, apart from industry festivals, would one see so many leading stars in the same room) on the crisis – a proclamation to continue working and speaking out for collaboration and co-habitation. Furthermore this ensemble approach, wherein many of the most notable names (Sonja Savić, Bogdan Diklić, Danilo ‘Bata’ Stojković, Olivera Marković) play characters from the asylum, directly creates a maddened vision of the Yugoslav cinematographic space, a glimpse of a common cultural heritage which now seems defamiliarised and estranged.

The use of Danilo ‘Bata’ Stojković (who plays former secret police officer, now mental patient, Vasilije) is a case in point, since the plot of *Burlesque Tragedy* posits that it is exactly this character’s legacy of involvement in politics that has cost him his sanity, now that the role he previously occupied (under Tito) no longer exists in the new system. This resonates curiously with Stojković’s many previous roles on the Yugoslav screen in which he repeatedly played petty and malevolent political officials or inadequate and failing father figures (see *Who is Singing over There?* (Šijan, 1980); *Balkan Spy* (Kovačević and Nikolić, 1984); or *Beach Guard in Winter* (Paskaljević, 1976) for examples). So in effect, *Burlesque Tragedy* offers us not only a vision of Danilo Stojković’s body within a mad role – but instead, by virtue of the mechanisms of Pogačar’s Yu-niverse – every famous failing father or state official role he has ever played now rendered mentally unstable because that which once supported such men (Yugoslavia as a political system and cultural space), now no

longer exists. The impact is a curious one to translate for non-domestic audiences (reliant as it was upon years of cumulative effects and references) but ultimately the effect is profoundly dependent upon a special form of inter-filmic intertextuality made possible by the shared heritage of the ‘Yu-niverse’ as a common cultural space. The alignment of this heritage with the abandoned patients of the asylum (by casting numerous stars of the ‘Yu-niverse’ as patients) and its de-familiarisation by virtue of their characterisation culminates in a potent estrangement from this shared cultural past developed over the 45 years of the second Yugoslavia.

Equally effective for a domestic audience is the way that Marković uses the dynamic of *extra*-filmic textuality to harness the newly-acquired meanings (ethno-national status) that many of his stars had had forced onto them by the media climate of the war (like Vlade Divac discussed previously, they too were celebrities in the public sphere around whom various political debates came to revolve). Mira Furlan, for instance, had become victimised and abused by nationalists from both Serbia and Croatia for the fact that, though Croatian, she had married a Serb. Both sides found her equally attractive as a target for threats and harassment, so much so that she eventually felt compelled to immigrate to the US.⁴⁸ Marković’s casting of her therefore signifies two things – at the political level it represents a refusal to be drawn into such nationalistic hatemongering – while at the textual level it renders her playing a character whose family had suffered from political harassment ever more potent. Likewise the casting of Sonja Savić, an outspoken critic of Milošević’s politics represents a similar symbol of solidarity for those marginalised by the warring regimes. In this respect, the simple fact of these actors continuing to work and be treated with professional respect – at least by each other – represents a point worthy of note, since many of them became common targets for vilification and abuse for many others. In other words, since in the climate of Yugoslav break-up and war, ethno-national status became a component of the film star persona by virtue of the totalising penetration of such discourses into all spheres of life, Marković incorporates this additional ethnic component of the star as signifier in order to stage a resistance to their potentially divisive consequences.

⁴⁸ Furlan (1996) published an open letter in which she attempted to share her unpleasant experiences during this period. In it, she referred to the stress of having her personal life become fuel for ‘the ever hungry propaganda beast’ (1996: 53) and tried to explain the reasons for her decision to continue working in both Zagreb and Belgrade theatres during the war – despite the fact that the journey between the two took around 24 hours owing to closed borders.

Hence it is possible to summarise these two key functions of casting in Marković's film as operative at the paratextual and intertextual levels. For the former, the use of an ensemble cast – many of whom had become outcasts and victims of the dominant nationalist discourse of the time – represents a statement of solidarity and attempt to resist the intrusion of binaristic and exclusionary nationalist discourses into film production activities. Secondly, in terms of the latter aspect (intertextual level), Marković's casting utilises effectively his actors' attendant symbolism in relation to the historic Yugoslav cultural space within the tropes of madness, thus creating a range of additional meanings pertaining to the damage and destruction of a cultural heritage and practice arising from the conflicts.

In summary therefore, these 'mad' performances of certain cultural activities central to contemporaneous political discourses on Yugoslav/Balkan/Serbian identities (turbo-folk music, wedding customs and sporting activity) form a consistent focus in Marković's film – which otherwise has relatively little in terms of traditional character and plot development since the film's structure is closer to a series of sketches than a consistent fictional narrative. They function to open up allusive intertextual connections with these other cultural spaces and practices across which Yugoslavism and/or Serbian/Croatian etc. national identities and futures were being debated and contested. Hence, Marković's *Burlesque Tragedy* provides an interesting case of film art produced against the backdrop of the crisis of Yugoslav break-up (conflict and destruction at the border, sanctions and desperation within his native Serbia). We know that a majority of the creative personnel involved (not only the director but also many of the high-profile cast), were profoundly disturbed by these developments and felt that their work couldn't and shouldn't be adapted in such a way as to bend to the demands of the emergent nationalistic discourses which propagated and justified further conflict. Aided by his international status, Marković was able to make a film without the involvement of the Serbian state and its media apparatus at a time when this was largely impossible for most domestic filmmakers. His film contains little in the way of classical characterisation or plotting, but is instead closer in form to a series of loosely connected allegorical sketches. These sketches often connect intertextually with other cultural spheres and spaces colonised by the totality of nationalistic discourses during the war. In this context, the inside-out asylum trope provides a means of ideological disarmament – a semantic destabilisation of the meanings (vis-à-vis collective identity and

its relation to politics) which were becoming increasingly attached to these practices. It is in this sense that *Burlesque Tragedy* represents a vital cultural attempt to resist the totalising intrusion of a divisive ideology into every aspect of war-time Serbian society in the early 1990s.

This ‘ideological demobilisation’ can be equally seen within another post-Yugoslav successor republic, Croatia, in a film produced towards the end of the decade, *Marshall Tito’s Spirit*. Here the discursive target is not a war-time ethno-national discourse as in *Burlesque Tragedy* but instead two other potent ideologies, one drawn from the socialist past (Titoism, Yugoslavism etc.) and one from the post-Yugoslav present (neo-liberalism and Croatian nationalism), both of which exerted a powerful hold on the contemporary Croatian society, and which were equally in need of a critical re-assessment in light of Croatia’s options for future development.

3.3.2. Comedy and the semiotics of the post-communist sign: *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* (Brešan, 1999)

Vinko Brešan’s *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* (1999) currently remains in the top ten of Croatia’s all-time most successful domestic productions at the box office as well as having won numerous accolades on the festival circuit. With the prominent father-son (writer-director) team of Ivo and Vinko Brešan attached to the project – previously associated with the ‘first war comedy’ to emerge after the conflict of the 1990s – *How the War Started on my Island* (Brešan, 1996), audiences were once more treated to a witty and light approach to heavy matters, this time relating to the struggles of post-communist transition via a spectrum of madness. Unlike *Burlesque Tragedy*, *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* has received at least some attention in academic literature most notably with a book chapter by Filipović (2003) providing a psychoanalytic reading of the film’s humour with regard to Freud’s concept of the ‘return of the repressed’. I propose here more of a semiotic analysis of the film’s engagement with various signs and symbols left over from the communist period, continuing with the focus on the inside-out asylum trope as a means for mobilising madness as a tool for semantic destabilisation, which will contribute towards an understanding of *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* as a vital cultural audit of the ideological landscape of post-Yugoslav Croatia at the end of the millennium.

The plot of the film concerns the havoc which is wrought upon a small island community when a patient, fond of impersonating the deceased founding father of the post-

WWII Yugoslavia, Marshall Tito, escapes from a local mental hospital. The various islanders all respond in differing ways – whether seeking to exploit the ‘ghost of Tito’ for commercial gain through tourism or seeking to re-implement socialism on the island now that the revolutionary leader has returned. Meanwhile, authorities from the mainland become increasingly concerned and dispatch police and secret service agents to bring the situation under control. Ultimately all those seeking to exploit the situation are thwarted and the patient is finally released into the sunset rather than returned to the asylum.

However, despite the film’s predominantly comic tones, light romantic subplot, and positive narrative resolution, its release was nonetheless originally controversial in Croatia, coming as it did towards the end of Franjo Tudjman’s post-war reign as President. As both Goulding (2002) and Filipović (2003) have described, the film was initially censored by state television and its trailers banned from being advertised on the network. That which deemed this necessary however (the film’s politically threatening relevance to a certain cultural moment in Croatia by addressing the ideological baggage of experiences and memories of socialism) is also that which ultimately rendered the censorship redundant (the film was so instantly successful in connecting with audiences that the ban proved totally ineffective). Both this failed censorship attempt and the film’s impressive domestic (and, to an extent, also international) success are arguably borne from *Marshall Tito’s Spirit’s* engagement with the relics, real and imaginary, of the communist period.

The central theme around which the narrative of *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* is based is the question of what to do with the shared historical communist past as it continues to persist (causing conflict and social division) in the form of various awkward debris – from the old party-era funeral ceremony habits of the former partisans to the dusty junk of statues, flags and relics scattered around the town’s museum – brought to the top of the agenda by the mental patient’s escape and subsequent chaos wrought. These relics extend also to the abandoned signifiers around which the Yugoslav subject was orientated (the hammer and sickle, ‘brotherhood and unity’, the pioneers’ uniform) – now bereft of their ideological supports in official discourse but problematically still surprising and confronting the islanders with their continued presence in neglected storerooms and on crumbling town structures – each time provoking some degree of fear and uncertainty. The film’s narrative structure is similar to a frequently-used arrangement in which some special temporary circumstances bring about a transformation of a small isolated community, but

with numerous characters involved so that the effect of a social cross-section can be achieved. In the course of the transformation there is usually a thematic exploration of collective identities, social relations, and the very aspects which define the community. See *Welcome Mr. Marshall* (Belanga, 1953) for an early and entertaining example from Spain, where the visit of a high-ranking official to a small village provides the narrative pretext for the transformation of the community – or otherwise *Fuse*, discussed later in the thesis, where a similar situation arises, this time with Bill Clinton visiting a small Bosnian village. In *Marshall Tito's Spirit*, the narrative pretext for the transformation of the community is also provided by a political visitor – although in this case it is a madman dressed as a notable figure from the Yugoslav past. Again, as in *Burlesque Tragedy*, the inside-out asylum trope essentially constitutes a process whereby the semantic instability of madness can be combined with the excessive ideological content of various cultural practices and political symbols – whose potency is the result of their extensive use in dominant political discourses (here, around socialism, Yugoslavism, and the cult of Tito).⁴⁹

As Sretenović (2003) has discussed, unlike in other post-communist countries, ‘there was no radical ideological demobilisation’ in the former Yugoslavia following the collapse of the international communist project, as the country instead descended into ethnic conflicts and subsequent partition. This resulted in ‘an ideological confusion and semantic surplus’ which Sretenović links to the ‘heightening of social tensions and upheavals’ itself a cause of the conflict. It is for this reason that the narrative of *Marshall Tito's Spirit* posits that *something* must be done (the relics simply won’t go away of their own accord – and in the meantime society remains susceptible to the sort of manipulations, paranoia and exploitation seen on the island once the ghost/Tito/patient starts to appear). However the difficulty in negotiating this ‘ideological demobilisation’ is evident in the inadequacy of the two potential solutions that can be seen from the competing authority figures on the island: Luka, the aspiring capitalist town mayor who sees the economic opportunity in ‘political tourism’ offered by these persisting resources, and Marinko, the ageing communist who attempts to utilise them for political gain (he wants to ‘finish the revolution’). Though power and money are somewhat different as the motivations of the two men, they produce similar consequences – a wide-scale release of a madness (initially

⁴⁹ For a thorough account of the continuing symbolic endurance of Tito (and the often global dimension of this phenomenon) see Velikonja (2008).

confined to Slavica's 'Tito' father) that sees the entire village subordinated in one way or another to the power of these relics.

What ensues thereafter is a comedy based upon a semiotic play or deconstruction of the signs of the communist era. In Luka's case, he seeks to re-create the appearance of the communist period for the benefit of nostalgic (elderly Yugoslav and Chinese/Russian etc.) tourists and hence organises a meeting of the town inhabitants (soon to be tourism workers) in order to instruct them on how to produce these effects for the tourist-customers. To this end he draws up a blueprint for the production of sloganeering boards and flags, with the three starting points: 'Down with...', 'Long live...', or 'Death to...'. The villagers must then insert one of three possible abstract nouns to complete each slogan; either 'socialism', 'self-management', 'comrade Tito' or 'brotherhood and unity' for the 'Long live..' genre of signs, while giving examples such as 'capitalism' and 'nationalism' for the 'Down with...' category, and so on. He concludes by stressing that 'who ever does it must be careful not to get confused and mix up the appropriate pairings'. This line, delivered as Luka stands beside his blueprint, presents the audience with a superb parody of the construction of the symbolic resources of communism by performing it from the perspective of the aspiring capitalist. Luka's warning against a mix-up presupposes the signifiers of communist ideology are wholly severed from their signifieds (only in such a situation would it be possible for Luka to even contemplate that someone might get mixed up and accidentally write 'Long live Fascism!' for example).⁵⁰ Judging by the laughter that this line prompts – it is clear that such a degree of 'ideological demobilisation' with regard to such slogans was not evident with domestic audiences as it was in Luka's head – for them, such a mix-up would of course seem highly unlikely.

Essentially Luka illustrates perfectly Jameson's understanding of post-modernism as the 'cultural logic of late capitalism', with his demented insistence on empty signifiers as potential commodities in the newly capitalist space of modern Croatia.⁵¹ However, the

⁵⁰ This particular scene resembles one from Luis Bunuel's 'surrealist provocation' *Simon of the Desert* (1965), which contains scenes of confused pious monks chanting 'Down with Christ!' and 'Long live heretics!' Stam (1989) has written of the pleasures offered by this scene in the context of Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque, and indeed it seems that similar dynamics are at work here too. There will be more on this in the concluding paragraphs.

⁵¹ Consider also for example the music which Luka organises to entertain the tourists, which is a post-modern hybrid of Jamaican reggae and psychedelic rock with soul backing vocals and Anglo-Croatian lyrics, with each of the elements entirely detached of the significance and meanings endowed by the original contexts of their origin and development, instead signifying only a kitsch which, unsurprisingly, fails to connect with the ageing tourists.

humour arises from the gap between Luka's (cynical) post-modernist play with the slogans and symbols of the socialist past – and the fact that for most of the other islanders, as for audiences, these signs continue to hold considerable ideological baggage. It is of course this fact that Luka's tourist venture seeks to exploit and his treatment of these signs as merely 2D images is juxtaposed humorously with the fact that for audiences they still meant something. Hence proclamations such as 'every day on this island is the 1st of May!' or 'our socialism celebrates youth, it celebrates age – it celebrates everything' offered a certain absurdist form of play – a 'slippage between the excessive fullness and the excessive emptiness of meaning' to quote Felman again.

Unlike Luka, Marinko did believe, and continues to believe, in the doctrines of the communist system. For him the internalised ideological supports of symbols such as the red star have been little diminished by the fact of their external removal over the past decade (as when he berates Stipan for the replacement of the red star on his police uniform with the new red and white national chequerboard stripe). Angered by Luka's empty kitsch parody of communism, Marinko attempts to re-assert the meanings which are missing from Luka's signs by way of 'finishing the revolution' – in other words, now that Luka has erected the outward symbolic resources of communism, all that remains to be done is just to re-instate communism 'behind the scenes' and the sign which reads 'Long live brotherhood and unity' will once more function in exactly the same way as it once did. The folly of such a delusion is made evident by Marinko being frequently outwitted by those around him with a more subtle and playful grip on the signs in question. Toni, the eternally-stoned other half of the island's defence force (along with Miško), is able to convince Marinko that he is worthy of being released from the latter's captivity with his assurances to perform a public service – namely 'watering the grass'. The ploy is successful only because Marinko is unable to conceive of the fluidity of the signified component that enables Toni to make this joke, alluding to his intentions to resume his marihuana cultivation rather than to do community service.

The rigid calcification of the components of the sign in Marinko's understanding later proves his undoing on an even greater scale in the conclusion of the film, when his blindness to the malleability of meaning results in him allowing a highly allegorical message from Stipan and Slavica to reach her father (the deluded patient), who is at that

point held prisoner in the town museum by Marinko, for purposes of serving the latter's political ambitions of 'finishing the revolution'. The message reads:

Dear Comrade Tito, the greatest son of our people and our country.

We believe in you and wait for you to achieve the final victory of self-management socialism! Marx stands before you – but with your body and your strength you can move him along the path of progress, and make the opening to the path of our future. Descend bravely, and take into your hands the hammer and sickle – raise it aloft, and bring it down upon the iron padlock that divides you from us...

The lunatic's captors obligingly deliver the message to their prisoner, seeing in it only the conventionalised metaphors of communist political rhetoric – with which they were raised, and not realising that, within the decrepit relic-filled museum in which they have imprisoned the madman, such a message suddenly becomes a step-by-step instruction list for escaping, by first moving the Karl Marx statue to reveal an opening in the wall, leading to another room with a hammer and sickle on the wall – with which to smash a padlock on a nearby window. Added comedy comes from the fact that, since his mind is eternally trapped with the repeating loops of Tito's famous mantras and speeches, the madman would be unable to follow the instructions were they written in plainer terms – but since they come in the familiar form of images with which his mind is swamped (hammers and sickles, doors to progress etc.), he is able to escape literally from his confinement, without even realising he is doing it (and instead thinking he is escaping into 'progress', etc.).⁵²

Sretenović has written of another film exploring the enduring power of Tito's image, *Tito among the Serbs for the Second Time* (Žilnik, 1993), 'when the actor imitating Josip Broz appears on the streets of Belgrade wearing the Marshall Tito's uniform, we realise by the reaction of the people he is talking to that Titoism has not yet been politically or emotionally worn out to such an extent as not to participate in the structuring of Yugoslav reality and longer.' It is this semantic surplus to which *Marshall Tito's Spirit* is addressed, namely via its play with the leftover signs of socialism – and their ideological residues. The widespread madness which is triggered amongst the island's population by the appearance of the Tito ghost/escaped mental patient is essentially facilitated by the fact

⁵² The irony here is that the old museum full of communist relics is the *only* prison from which the madman could escape since it is comprised of the only signifiers which his mind responds to – hammers and sickles, statues of Lenin and Marx and so on.

that this society remains vulnerable to manipulation, confusion, and fear resulting from the semantic instabilities inherent in the various leftover communist signifiers either kept in the museum, on a policeman's uniform or the social and cultural practices of the community. By the end of the film, it is clear that neither a nihilistic post-modernism which supposes such signs to be completely devoid of any meaning (i.e. Luka's position) nor a dogmatism which refuses to acknowledge that their meaning has changed in the intervening decades (i.e. Marinko's position) will achieve a satisfactory resolution to the problem of this lingering ideological baggage. For this to be achieved, a more fluid relation to these signs and symbols is required. As Filipović (2003) has identified in relation to the film, 'laughter serves to detach oneself from previous over-idealisation' and indeed the harmony and stability which is finally achieved at the narrative's positive resolution is only made possible by the purging of these semantic surpluses and instabilities – something only possible however once all of the villagers (and the viewer) have passed through an experience of madness – as a very specific and uncertain relation to these signifiers.

3.4. The 'carnavalesque' component of the inside-out asylum trope

Such an uncertain relation to the signifiers of official discourses – either the present-day one of *Burlesque Tragedy* (i.e. Milošević's militarism) or the one of the past in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* (i.e. Titoism and self-management socialism) – is best understood in relation to other similar traditions in which the ultimate effect is a de-naturalising of the dominant ideology as it is manifested in language and embodied in gestures and everyday practices. In his ground-breaking study of theatre of the absurd, Esslin traces many of its performative conventions from the stage conventions of antiquity right through to the 20th century theatre of Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionescu and Harold Pinter. The social significance of the reconfiguration of such conventions within the context of these modern playwrights is linked to the rise of rationalism and scientific discourses and the declining status of religion in providing an organised and total worldview for the human societies of early-mid 20th century Europe. Esslin writes that within the immediate post WWII context:

there were many... searching for a way in which they can, with dignity, confront a universe deprived of what was once its centre and living purpose, a world deprived of a generally accepted integrating principle, which has become disjointed, purposeless – absurd. (2004: 339)

Then, further on:

The means by which the dramatists of the absurd express their critique – largely instinctive and unintended – of our disintegrating society are based on suddenly confronting their audiences with a grotesquely heightened and distorted picture of a world that has gone mad. This is a shock therapy that achieves what Brecht's doctrine of the 'alienation effect' postulated in theory... (2004: 410)

The role of the clown – in delivering this 'grotesquely heightened and distorted picture' – is thus central, and is also essential in understanding the inside-out asylum trope in post-Yugoslav cinemas. Just as the introduction of clowning performative conventions became integral to the theatre of the absurd's confrontation with a world in ideological flux and confusion – so too the escaped asylum inmate establishes a similar role in the films in question within this thesis section, dealing not with a loss of god but nonetheless a series of other significant ideological transitions in the societies in question. In order to outline this process further it is useful to introduce Bakhtin's influential survey (1982) of the Rabelaisian world of the folk carnival, in which there is an equal emphasis on similar figures:

The rogue, the clown and the fool create around themselves their own special little world, their own chronotope... Their very appearance, everything they do and say, cannot be understood in a direct and unmediated way but must be grasped metaphorically...

Essential to these three figures is a distinctive feature that is as well a privilege – the right to be "other" in this world, the right not to make common cause with any single one of the existing categories that life makes available; none of the categories quite suits them, they see the underside and falseness of every situation. (1982: 159)

In essence, Bakhtin's notion of the 'carnavalesque' is predicated on the role of this 'other' that sees the 'underside and falseness of every situation'. By virtue of the clown or rogue's transgressive performance its subject is seen in a new light. However, in order for this process to function the performance must come from this position of 'otherness' so that the estrangement can be effected. The social power of this performance is neatly summarised by Wills (1989), who has written 'the power of the carnival to turn things upside-down is

facilitated by bringing it into dialogic relation with official forms' (1989: 132). In other words, the filtering of official forms through the performative matrix of the clown's otherness results in a fundamental othering of these official forms, facilitating a fresh look at the familiar – which thereby also indicates the 'carnavalesque' to be a mode with a progressive and transformative potential; summarising precisely its appeal in the post-Yugoslav cultural contexts.

As Bakhtin concluded:

Rabelais' basic goal was to destroy the official picture of events. He strove to take a new look at them... he summoned all the resources of sober popular imagery in order to break up official lies and the narrow seriousness dictated by the ruling classes. Rabelais did not implicitly believe what his time "said and imagined about itself"; he strove to disclose its true meaning for the people... (1982: 439).

It is in the appropriation of 'sober popular imagery' also that the inside-out asylum trope functions to 'break up official lies and the narrow seriousness dictated by the ruling classes'. However, the escaped inmate is a somewhat less playful figure than the Rabelaisian clown or rogue – enacting a performance, often without conscious control, which is *unknowingly* subversive and controversial. Likewise, in the association with the image of the asylum the escaped patient figure has a potential for thematising official discourses of the state and political ruling elites, thereby – as Clair Wills above states – bringing the carnival into dialogic relation with official forms.⁵³ The escaped patient (and those who fall under his spell in *Marshall Tito's Spirit*) is therefore more of a pathetic figure in his compulsive and repetitive performance – and yet one whose fundamental otherness also facilitates the distance required to effect the semantic disarming resulting from the madman's 'failure to grasp the simplest logical relations' – which in these films are actually those assumptions and habits naturalised by prevailing ideological discourses of those in power whether in those who lived through Tito's Yugoslavism or Milošević's Serbia.

⁵³ It should be noted that the inside out asylum trope places less emphasis on the morality of the body (as was central in Bakhtin's notion of the Rabelaisian carnivalesque) – although, as will be elaborated further in the next chapter, it does nonetheless play an important role in the process of transgressive performance orientated towards semiotic reconfiguration.

3.5. Conclusions

Post-Yugoslav films have more often than not thematised their contemporary socio-political contexts in the effort to process momentous social change and crisis that characterised the experience of the Yugoslav conflicts and subsequent transitions. The examples of films making use of the inside-out asylum tropes discussed here, from Serbia and Croatia, respectively, are no different – although the timing of their production and release gives them all the status of early and controversial forays into subject matter that was likely to cause controversy. Nonetheless, they were not all received equally by domestic audiences with *Marshall Tito's Spirit* proving a huge popular success (perhaps because it posits a resolution of the semantic tensions in question) and *Burlesque Tragedy* something of a non-event owing to inadequate distribution infrastructure for its war-time release, which coincided with sanctions. Both however were released at an early stage of the post-Yugoslav transition for the respective republics in question at a time when, although some years might have passed since the official demise of the Yugoslav federation, in many social, cultural, and political respects – little had changed.

What these films share at the textual level is a playful engagement with political symbols and politicised cultural practices which were frequently found in contemporaneous discourses around collective (national) identities. This takes the form of a carnivalesque pleasure as defined by Bakhtin, provoking laughter which ‘demolishes fear and piety before an object... thus clearing the ground for an absolutely free investigation.’ (1982: 23). In these cases where such carnivalesque play is structured by the inside-out asylum trope, the process of engagement is one whereby the semantic instability of madness is utilised to effect a form of ideological disarmament of the politicised investment that such symbols represented – whether a hammer and sickle in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* or real-life basketball player – but also, in the mid-1990s context, ethno-national marker – Vlade Divac in *Burlesque Tragedy*. A semantic/syntactic perspective on the post-Yugoslav inside-out asylum trope shows that the various crises arising from the break-up of Yugoslavia effect a narrative pre-text for the break-down of the inside/outside spatial boundary – and a noticeable absence of ‘keepers’ i.e. the agents of the state. This both establishes the effect of an ‘open film’ – which creates a closer thematic engagement with the contemporary world within which the film is set (i.e. present day transition contexts) and dramatises the crumbling of the previous social, political and economic order. Although dealing with very

different specific themes and ideological discourses (socialism, Serbian wartime national identity discourses, Kosovan nation-building ones as will be discussed in the next chapter), all of these films ultimately have more commonalities than differences, representing a cultural activity which seeks to reduce and dispel the excessive ideological potency of the specific political, and politicised, signs which have been mobilised to achieve or justify various questionable goals in the master narratives of the (then) ruling political parties. The most prescient difference between the two films discussed is one of tone; whereas the Croatian *Marshall Tito's Spirit* is light-hearted comedy in which the community is ultimately successful in freeing itself from the grip of divisive ideologies, the war-time Serbian production of *Burlesque Tragedy* offers a far bleaker assessment of the prospects for success in the same endeavour. What madness brings in this context, as a cultural and rhetorical device, is an excuse to approach the contemporary experience from a radical sideways angle – to achieve a trick of perspective that allows for a plurality of perspectives on pressing current conditions of life in the republic in question.

The ultimate conclusion however is not only to fall back on the oft-used ‘artist vs. regime’ cliché but to note that both of these examples from post-Yugoslav cinemas indicate the potential for film to function as a cultural site which intersects the official discourses that, during the Yugoslav period under Tito or in Milošević’s Serbia, sought to establish a totalising framework for understanding one’s relation to the surrounding society and world. Both films represent attempts to enter into ‘dialogic relation with official forms’ in a uniquely creative manner by using a full range of performative and expressive techniques – at the heart of which is the inside-out asylum based trope of madness; in effect a tool for the semantic deconstruction of popular symbols⁵⁴ with an excessive ideological investment. Although varyingly successful,⁵⁵ both films can in the final analysis be understood as evidence of a culture seeking to rid itself of a certain ideological baggage; surely an essential first step (although hardly a guarantee) for any sort of progressive change in the post-Yugoslav transition context.

⁵⁴ The word is here used in a wider sense to encompass verbal, gestural, and iconic signifiers.

⁵⁵ While *Marshall Tito's Spirit* registered a huge domestic success in connecting with audiences – coinciding with a crucial change in Croatia’s political transition (move away from Tudjman’s party following his death), *Burlesque Tragedy*’s failure to score a similar success is not only a result of its poorer distribution in less favourable conditions (i.e. during wartime), but is also an indicator of the wider continuing endurance of Milošević’s grip on power and militaristic ideology through the mid 1990s. Of course, it is not that the films should be understood as the relative instigators of change or its absence – but rather that their relative impact with domestic audiences also perhaps indicates the extent to which such discourses were ‘ideologically disarm-able’ in the specific contexts in question.

Chapter 4:

The inside-out asylum and the road movie in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2006): where madness meets the nation-building discourse

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined two films that utilised the trope of an ‘inside-out asylum’ in the context of a thematic engagement with political issues surrounding post-Yugoslav transitions. Although made and released a few years apart from each other, both films were produced in a similar transition context – namely one in which political pluralism had not yet been established and a strong element of unofficial censorship through taboo restricted the range of cultural engagement with contemporary conditions of living. Within such a cultural context, the inside-out asylum trope enacted a form of carnivalesque ideological ‘demobilisation’ – a semantic disarmament of signifiers appropriated by official discourses of Milošević’s militarism or Tito’s self-management socialism in *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Marshall Tito’s Spirit*, respectively.

This chapter introduces a third title to the discussion – the Kosovan 2005 production directed by Isa Qosja, *Kukumi* – here examining how the inside-out asylum trope combines with road movie conventions for thematising the nation-building discourses of the Kosovan push for independence from Serbia in the mid 2000s. The film’s plot, set during the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo in the wake of Milošević’s surrender to NATO after the bombing campaign of 1999, focuses upon three Kosovan inmates of a dilapidated asylum, who abandon its four walls when the fleeing Serb guards leave the gates open. Thereafter, the narrative resembles a fairly clear ‘road movie’ structure as the three protagonists undertake a wandering journey, exploring the space and society which they encounter on the outside of the asylum walls. *Kukumi* will thereby facilitate a further exploration of the inside-out asylum trope, building on the ‘carnivalesque’ engagement with ideologically-loaded signifiers discussed previously, by now turning attention to how the trope incorporates ‘state of the nation’ genres and plot structures through the idiosyncratic breakdown of the asylum and its symbolic potential for inverting and re-examining dominant values and ideologies. This time however the focus is on Kosovo, arguably the most ideologically unstable and contested successor territory of the three discussed in this thesis section, and also the one in which the inside-out asylum trope is rendered additionally significant given that *Kukumi* still represents, to this day one of only a

handful of Kosovan feature titles produced since the Yugoslav break-up. The analysis will therefore focus on explaining the means by which *Kukumi*, and its simple narrative of three wanderings outcasts, functions as a very pertinent and critical engagement with both the prevailing direction and domestic understanding of Kosovan post-Yugoslav (and post-Serbian) transition.

Indeed, in all three of the inside-out asylum trope examples featured in this thesis section, what ensues after the failure of confinement of the asylum inmates or patients⁵⁶ is a narrative structure which is ideally suited to taking stock of the current state of the community (constructed in national terms) surrounding the asylum. In *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Kukumi* especially this takes the form of a road movie type of journey in which the patients/inmates explore the space and society found outside the asylum walls. In *Marshall Tito's Spirit* what happens 'outside' the asylum is instead the common plot trope wherein the pending arrival of an outsider/visitor prompts an examination and transformation of the community.⁵⁷ In essence, the plots are two sides of the same coin with the difference being mainly one of perspective – whether or not the protagonists of the film are the 'outsiders' – i.e. escaped asylum patients – who visit a community (in which case we get the road movie structure as they explore the community and experience it anew) or taken from the community itself which is visited by these outsiders (here we have the plots in which this community responds to the outsiders' arrival, again ultimately re-experiencing itself in a new, estranged, light). In both cases the shared ground is that the narratives stage numerous encounters between the insiders/outsiders of the community and that ultimately these encounters are ones which prompt re-assessments of the ways in which collective identities are defined – and their boundaries maintained.

In these three films it is clear that the inside-out asylum trope in post-Yugoslav cinemas entails a hybrid form combining the allegorical power of the asylum, and those inside it, and, secondly, narrative structures – such as those of the road movie – which facilitate an introspective assessment of the contemporary social and political milieu. Moreover, the combination of these two elements is precisely what gives this trope its

⁵⁶ In *Kukumi*, 'inmates' is a more appropriate term – with not a doctor in sight on the premises, the asylum is clearly a simple site of confinement. *Marshall Tito's Spirit* and *Burlesque Tragedy* do however feature doctors who seem to care for those housed inside the facility, so perhaps, in relation to those films, patients is a more appropriate term.

⁵⁷ This type of narrative is evident also in *Fuse* – although that film is discussed in the subsequent thesis section. See the discussion in chapters 3 and 5 for more on this plot trope in relation to *Marshall Tito's Spirit* and *Fuse*, respectively.

potential for engaging contemporary discourses and ideologies in a creative and subversive manner. This thesis section is devoted to the question of how the inside-out asylum trope engages contested aspects of official discourses in post-Yugoslav transition contexts. The current chapter will, in this context, provide a close reading of *Kukumi*, building on the previous discussion of ‘ideological demobilisation’ by examining how road movie conventions are re-configured through the presence of the asylum and its escapees – and how this ultimately engages the post-Yugoslav Kosovan nation-building discourse.

The key focus for the chapter therefore revolves around the following questions:

- What is the relevance of the road-movie to post-socialist, and specifically post-Yugoslav, cinemas?
- How are road movie conventions re-configured within *Kukumi*’s inside-out asylum trope?
- How does the inside-out asylum trope in *Kukumi* facilitate a critical self-reflexive assessment of the contemporaneous Kosovan nation-building discourse?

The central contention is that the road-movie is essentially a means of organising narrative in a highly spatially-predicated manner. In other words, narrative progression is often synonymous with spatial movement and, as a result, these films often thematise human relationships with space, place, landscape, and territory. This type of narrative structure also facilitates a series of encounters between characters that examine oppositions between centre/periphery, hegemony/resistance, and mainstream/marginality, and thus probe at the ideological underpinnings which unite these people under a common nationality. As Bakhtin writes of the road in literary fiction:

On the road, the spatial and temporal paths of the most varied people – representatives of all social classes, estates, religions, nationalities, ages – intersect at one spatial and temporal point. People who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet; any contrast may crop up, the most various fates may collide and interweave with one another. (1982: 243)

This classic function of the road in the novel is one similarly evident in various cinematic traditions, whereby the potential of the road to act as a site of unusual encounters or meetings is one feature which renders it well suited to explore themes around community and confrontation with difference. Such cinematic narratives have been exceptionally

prominent in post-socialist, and post-Yugoslav cinemas and have been used to express a range of perspectives on related issues of the ‘transition’ contexts – whether around contested territories, migration, EU integration, and so on. In most cases, the road movie narrative structure posits a tension between the related notions of journey and destination – and thus provides a highly versatile means to engage with certain post-Yugoslav societies in which political discourse revolves around defining which destination (vision for the future) is most desirable – and how the journey (transition) should best be managed. No studies of *Kukumi* have however thus far been published, despite the fact that it is the first ever post-Yugoslav Kosovan production (and still one of only a few films made in Kosovo in recent years) – meaning that its absence from academic scholarship is even more glaring if we wish to understand how post-Yugoslav change has specifically been thought about in the Kosovan context.

4.2. The long and winding road (of post-Socialist transition)

As various studies of political rhetoric have shown, the imagery of roads and maps is an oft-used rhetorical feature in situations where there is a political need to acknowledge the unsatisfactory nature of the present situation – and indicate it to be only transitory. The desired and satisfactory situation is therefore installed as the destination in the metaphor – and the process of attaining it becomes the (road) journey. Notable examples of this rhetoric can be seen in Winston Churchill’s ‘road to victory’ in 1940, Martin Luther King’s ‘road to freedom’ in 1957, or, more recently, Tony Blair’s ‘road-map to peace’ in the Middle East.⁵⁸ A defining characteristic of conceptualising immediate conditions after 1989-1991 in post-socialist and post-Yugoslav societies has been through a similar ‘goal-orientated’ discourse of transition – in which the ultimate destination was usually the establishment of a liberal-democratic political system and the achievement of a Western European economic standard. Thus the continuing presence of interim conditions of inflation, unemployment, or political crisis (which do not fit with this destination) indicates that the journey – or transition – is ongoing. Moreover, despite the fact that significant variations are evident with regard to the post-socialist development of the former Eastern bloc states, one of the common features is that a broad discourse of ‘transition’ has been

⁵⁸ See Charteris-Black (2005) for an extensive account of metaphor in politics – including the pervasiveness of road metaphors. Conover (2011) also provides a thorough cross-cultural study in road metaphors in various cultures.

manifested as a conceptual framework for understanding the present, both from within and without the region. In light of this fact, it is less surprising that the feature of the ‘road movie’ cinematic narrative has been commonly utilised across various post-socialist cultures in facilitating thematic engagements with these contexts of transition.

However, before discussing existing scholarly work on post-socialist road movies, it is first worth elaborating a little on what is meant by the term in a general sense. I use the term here loosely to designate cinematic narratives in which the central organising principle of narrative is the protagonists’ undertaking of a journey through physical space. According to the common principles of commercial feature-film screenwriting, this spatial movement is usually goal-defined, or motivated, to some extent – even if this motivation might extend only to protagonists’ need or wish to escape from something or even to simply experience the pleasures of a journey undertaken for its own sake. The road movie is crucially differentiated from other types of narrative, which might also feature a spatial movement or journey, by virtue of the fact that it attaches a large part of narrative significance to the journey itself. A simple metric for example is the amount of screen time devoted to what happens on the journey – compared with what happens at the destination (if the latter is ever even reached). However, even though the destination usually commands much less screen-time than the events of the journey, this is not to say that it is insignificant. In fact the road movie relies on a central tension between these two related concepts of journey and destination. The definitive feature of the road movie narrative is the inversion of significance attached to the two whereby, contrary to some other narratives types, what happens on the journey ultimately impacts upon understandings and perspectives of the destination.

Despite its wide-varying utilisation in a variety of cinematic or literary genres,⁵⁹ the road movie narrative structure does nonetheless possess certain further frequently occurring features, some unique to it – others less so. In particular, these include the potential for integrating an episodic narrative structure in which various minor characters can be

⁵⁹ Whether or not the road movie is a genre in itself is a matter up for extensive discussion – but not something which is central to my argument here. Certain critics, including Bechmann-Pederson (2012) whose work is discussed later on, do conceptualise the road movie as a genre. I would contend that according to the most recent accounts of genre (especially Rick Altman’s updated work from 1999) ‘road movies’ can only be understood as a genre if looked at from a textual perspective – but do not satisfy paratextual definitions of the term; for example, fan communities are not organised around this category in the same way as they are for ‘sci-fi’ or ‘horror’, although for purposes of this chapter it does not matter too much whether the road movie is considered a genre or simply an archetypal narrative structure.

encountered within the context of individual episodes – which need not be (but of course can be) reintroduced again later in the narrative. Secondly, as well as this potential for handling a high number of minor characters, the road movie narrative also often attaches a special significance to the features of space, environment, and landscape, and likewise to the mechanics of movement through it (vehicles, roads, etc.). Thus the iconography of the road movie (a semantic definition of the genre) revolves around a focus on the technologies of transport (roads, railways, motorbikes, cars, etc.) and the experiences of space that they facilitate – while its syntactic features are defined by protagonists (often characterised, in various ways, as social outsiders) undertaking a journey as a means of escape, adventure or both. The thematic concerns of the road movie are often structured around a similar taxonomy of oppositions as those found in various asylum-based tropes of madness: freedom/oppression, the individual/social collective, movement/confinement, social norms/difference.

The road movie has only recently started attracting scholarly interest but already it is evident from currently available literature that these semantic and syntactic features, as well as the thematic focus they often generate, gives the road movie an ‘obvious potential for romanticising alienation as well as for problematising the uniform identity of the nation’s culture’ (Cohan and Hark, 1997: 1). Most significantly of all, for purposes of this discussion, is that:

...a road movie provides a ready space for exploration of the tensions and crises of the historical moment during which it is produced. Key moments in the history of the road movie tend to come in periods of upheaval and dislocation, such as the Great Depression, or in periods whose dominant ideologies generate fantasies of escape and opposition, as in the late 1960’s. (1997: 2)

Although both contexts referred to by Cohan and Hark here relate to that of the US, it is clear that the transition contexts of post-socialist Europe – and especially those of post-Yugoslav successor states – could also be considered as ones of ‘great upheaval and dislocation’. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are numerous examples of such titles produced in a number of post-socialist states, some of which are highlighted in current scholarly literature. Before discussing the specificity of the road movie in the context of the inside-out asylum trope, it is worth summarising briefly the key arguments and perspectives of

five recent works in particular, Beumers (2010), Vidan (2011), Georgescu (2012), Dickenson (2010), and Bechmann-Pederson (2012).

Beumers (2010) has devoted attention to ‘nostalgic journeys’ in post-soviet cinemas relating the narratives of spatial movement to Svetlana Boym’s definition of nostalgia as a ‘longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed’ (2010: xiii and 96) – relevant especially in the post-socialist context for the reason that these transition experiences often involved for many the loss of either a symbolic (the absence of a functioning state, breakdown in ideologies of collective identity) or literal home (resulting displacement or migration). Consequently the nature of the journey undertaken in the post-socialist road movies she examines is essentially nostalgic due to both the destination (lost home) and the journey that always reveals it to be elusive. Beumers also importantly points out that, in the post-soviet contexts in question, the symbolism of the journey is additionally inflected by historic barriers to movement in Russia and the former soviet union, some of which (international regulation of borders which, more often than not, restricts citizens of these states for example) remain in place even in the contemporary post-soviet setting. Examining narratives of migration in Central Asian and Russian cinemas, Beumers discusses how the encounters – between East and West, urban and rural, traditional and modern – facilitated by journeys and movement can be read as a commentary on the post-socialist search for new models of national identity that are needed in the absence of the USSR’s ideologies of collective identity.

Vidan (2011), focusing on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinemas, also relates cinematic road movie narratives to experiences of the post-socialist transition, and particularly the changing status of the post-Yugoslav subject vis-à-vis frameworks of collective identity. She contends that ‘one of the dominant trends in post-1991 cinema of the region is the exploration of space both as a narrative and as a political category’ (2011: 174) and points out that throughout both Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinematic cultures ‘the thing that remains common is the perception of space as a signifier of ideology’ (2011: 182). However, the marked development of transition is the paradigm shift in the dominant relation to space evident in these narratives. Whereas genres such as the Yugoslav-era ‘partisan film’ were characterised by narratives which moved towards a (successful) appropriation and command of space (‘goal-defined movement and unquestioned purpose’), post-Yugoslav cinemas have produced road movie/journey narratives in which

the opposite is true. Vidan's article briefly discusses ten such post-Yugoslav road movies and concludes that the overriding convention is now that of journeys which come to a premature halt, circular and cyclical movements, and ultimately a sense of 'travelling and not arriving'. These aimless and pointless journeys reflect a sense of 'political deadlock' in a space in which transition has taken on an air of permanence and the hoped-for destination seems further than ever.

Meanwhile, Georgescu (2012) has broached the subject of the cinematic road movie in the context of one of the most globally-successful post-1989 film cultures; the so-called New Romanian Cinema, again stressing that the emphasis of these films lies in evidencing a 'state of the spirit of the nation' (2012: 26). Once again, the fundamental question relates to the types of journey which comprise these narratives, how and why they are made, and whether or not a destination is ever reached. Georgescu conceptualises these questions using the notions of the 'sidereal' and the 'radical' types of journey as proposed by Baudrillard and Guillaume (2008). The 'sidereal' journey is

...the most contemporary type of journey... a journey without meaning, where only movement, speed, and circulation matters. The heroes of the sidereal journey are suspended in-between point A and point Z of their travel, incapable of landing or taking off... (2008: 65).

The 'radical' journey on the other hand is 'a trip meant for the discovery of meaning'. The key distinction then becomes one of whether or not the journey is a means to an end – or whether the journey is a means *without* an end in the road narratives of the New Romanian Cinema (such a distinction will also be brought to bear in relation to *Kukumi* later in the chapter).

Bechmann-Pederson (2012) looks at examples of the road movie in Czech and German cinema, noting that it was not until 1989 that these types of narrative became prominent in these film cultures – something he attributes to the fact that, with the fall of the iron curtain, the former Eastern bloc began slowly moving towards inclusion within the continent's various high-speed transport infrastructures and reduced bureaucratic barriers to mobility. Furthermore, he adds that two particular aspects of the road movie make it relevant to studies of post-socialist transitions with respect to nation-building: the fact that these films often involve 'scrutiny of self and other' and 'travel in a space clearly

articulated as national’ – meaning that these films allow for an analysis of the ‘thematization of nation’ (2012: 121). Key questions for the analysis are:

In what surroundings does the action take place and what is the relation between the different spaces encountered at home and abroad? How is the transition from state socialism to market economy presented and how do the characters cope with the transformation process? How is the past represented and what are the hopes for the future? Answering these questions enhances our understanding of the contentious issues of identity that accompanied the transition process and the new mobility. (2012: 120)

The chapter focuses on a number of German and Czech titles, examining their road narratives as responses to contemporary perceptions of mobility in the post-socialist space. Ultimately, there is a marked contrast between the levels of optimism for the pleasure and reward of movement – with East Germans shown as care-free and hopeful travellers traversing the new post-socialist space, while their Czech counterparts retain a more ambiguous attitude, continually conscious of the greater level of resistance that their journeys might encounter (typically bureaucratic and financial – especially in films made before 2004, correlating roughly with the Czech Republic’s change in status relative to the EU with the accession of that year).

One final work is worth introducing before moving onto the specific discussion of the post-Yugoslav titles relevant for this chapter. Although dealing with Palestinian cinema, Dickenson’s chapter on road (-block) movies (2010) is relevant here especially owing to the parallels between Palestine and Kosovo (the setting for *Kukumi*) as being highly spatially contested territories in which the road movie takes on a hyper-symbolic relevance as a thematisation of issues around nation. One reason for this is found in the fact that the citizens of these contested territories have a much reduced level of both internal and trans-border mobility than even the average inhabitant of a post-socialist state in 1989, meaning that narratives of spatial movement touch upon a highly central and definitive aspect of contemporary experience. In such a cultural context, the symbolism of the road and narratives of spatial movement therefore take on an additionally potent symbolism for engaging themes related to the ‘state-of-the-nation’.

What all of these studies indicate is that the road movie – understood as a broad category in which narrative is structured around a spatial movement – is one of the

archetypal features within a number of post-socialist cinematic cultures. Moreover, these films repeatedly lend themselves to being read as an allegorical expression of perspectives on the various transition processes which the fall of communism triggered – although this is not to say that the ultimate tone of all these films is consistent across all such post-socialist titles. In fact, the differing configurations of the various examples of the road movie narrative are often indicative of the subtle differences in post-socialist experiences and perceptions of them. In light of this, it is the aim of this chapter to examine a relevant case study from post-Yugoslav cinemas – which also entails certain specific considerations not seen in the other road movies discussed previously – namely around the use of the asylum as both point of origin and, in some of the more pessimistic titles, ultimate destination.

This chapter will therefore be devoted to a discussion of the inside-out asylum trope in *Kukumi*, which is both the first Kosovan feature of the post-Yugoslav period and, interestingly, the first Kosovan road movie. Introducing the road movie as a common post-socialist cinematic feature, functioning typically as allegory for transition, is thus essential in understanding the nuances of the inside-out asylum trope in *Kukumi*, and therefore also for answering the question of how post-Yugoslav tropes of madness engage contemporary identity discourses in the fledgling independent state of Kosovo. The primary focus for the analysis will be to consider how the asylum functions as both point of departure and point of arrival in *Kukumi*'s inflection of the road movie genre and, secondly, how the protagonists' status as additionally alienated outsiders (not only as travellers arriving from a different place – but as escaped inmates arriving from the *most* different place) structures *Kukumi*'s road movie allegory for the Kosovan post-Yugoslav experience.

4.3. Film culture in a UN protectorate: *Kukumi* and the contemporary Kosovan context

There are a number of relevant contextual factors that make *Kukumi* an especially significant film within studies of post-Yugoslav cinemas in a broader sense – and indeed the films of transition in a more specific one. Firstly, it should be noted that – despite the year being 2005 – Kosovo was at this point very much still undergoing a complex transition process. Having seen two conflicts between the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and Serb military and police in the late 1990s (the second of which culminated in a NATO bombardment and the surrender of Milošević's forces in the region) the former province has since been highly contested, caught between the push for independence led by Kosovo-

Albanian political leaders, and the continuing resistance to this from Serbia's political establishment. Indeed, the region's continuing unresolved status is, even today, perhaps the biggest brake on development in Kosovo and ensures difficult and often hopeless prospects are still a thing of the present rather than the past.

These conditions are thus clearly not conducive to the production of feature film, something requiring either strong state backing (especially with regard to financial support) or a thriving network of independent producers making the most of capital investment and production infrastructure. Kosovo – a small, fledgling state of 2 million which had for forty-five years been the poorest Yugoslav region and was now the most deprived post-Yugoslav one, especially in 2005, had neither. In this context, the revival of the Kosovafilm production company (which had produced Qosja's two controversial features in the 1980s; see more below) was a significant step towards establishing some sort of domestic cinematic culture. The allocation of 450,000 euros for the budget of the first film of this new phase was equally significant considering that production costs in Kosovo were very low – meaning the budget would stretch considerably. Owing to Kosovo's lack of post-production facilities, a co-production agreement was reached with the Croatian company, Jadran Film, for post-production to be completed there. However, as well as being a title whose timing is significant in the contexts of Kosovan film culture, *Kukumi* is also one which marks a key moment in its director's career.

Born in Montenegro, Isa Qosja had studied dramatic arts in Priština and, later, film directing in Belgrade before going on to gain a diverse experience of theatre, documentary, and short film direction in the early 1980s. However, it was with his two features in 1984 and 1988 (titled *Proka* and *Guardians of the Fog*, respectively) that he rose to the level of a significant director – not only for the films' success with a few international awards but also for the controversy with which they were received by authorities focused on the heated issue of Kosovo's status within Serbia and Yugoslavia during the late 1980s.⁶⁰ Qosja's films were read by officials as nationalist and separatist allegories fuelling the trouble and

⁶⁰ For an English-language account of these censorship controversies see Ajeti and Hoti (2008). Much of Qosja's trouble with Yugoslav censors, aside from his 1988 film's thematic focus on negative Albanian experiences of the communist period, can be traced back to his plans for a film adaptation of a 1974 novel, written by a prominent Kosovo-Albanian Professor Rexhep Qosja (no relation to Isa Qosja). Rexhep Qosja was a notable polemicist on the issue of Albanian equality in Yugoslavia and some of the attention paid to the work of Isa Qosja can be explained by his association, by virtue of the planned adaptation (which was never to materialise in fact) of Rexhep's novel. This is an area certainly meriting some extended study as currently there is little known about the precise details.

his career was effectively over before it had even fully gotten started. This is therefore the first key point – when Qosja made *Kukumi* in 2005, it was only his third feature film coming a full seventeen years after his second. He had by that stage been sufficiently tainted by the controversies of the 1980s (labelled a covert Kosovo-Albanian nationalist and separatist) that he perhaps seemed like a safe pair of hands for handling the first feature film produced in the UN protectorate of Kosovo, especially now that Yugoslav censors could no longer interfere with his work.⁶¹

Kukumi was therefore shot in 45 days using various rural locations in Kosovo in 2005. It takes as its setting a major point of interest for the early Kosovan cinema – the transfer of status of Kosovo from Serbian control to being a UN protectorate in 1999, also evident in another early title *Tonight is Cancelled* (Grant, 2007).⁶² The narrative of *Kukumi* commences at exactly this year-zero for the post-Yugoslav Kosovan state – a zenith of transition – with a title card at the beginning indicating that we are in ‘Kosova 1999’. The camera pans around a dilapidated building housing the physically disabled and mentally ill patients, before cutting to the guards’ office where a radio announcement informs the Serb guards that Milošević has surrendered to the NATO forces. The guards quickly gather themselves and jump into a car to flee back to Serbia, leaving the gates of the asylum wide open – to the bemusement of those kept inside the compound’s high fences. This then prompts the former inmates to depart from the asylum and the narrative focuses in particular on the wanderings of three of them – Kukum, Hasan, and Mara – who explore the space and society they find outside but ultimately discover that, despite the newfound optimism among the general population, the world around them is still as harsh and cruel as it was before. Only this time it is more difficult to attribute responsibility for this state of affairs. In the end, Kukum is efficiently murdered by a UN/KFOR patrol tank which mistakes his flute for a rifle,⁶³ while Hasan and Mara – having been turned away from their families and neighbours – return to the asylum in the final scene of the film. The overall tone is therefore a deeply pessimistic perspective on the moment of Kosovan transition

⁶¹ After the NATO bombing of Serbia and Montenegro in 1999, Kosovo was established as a UN protectorate owing to its contested territorial status. In 2008 the Kosovan political leadership declared independence from Serbia in a move recognised by around half of the UN’s member states.

⁶² Arben Zharku, director of the Kosovo Cinematographic Centre (established to promote Kosovan film culture), has claimed in an interview with Cineuropa that the Kosovan-Irish production *Tonight is Cancelled* was the first – although it was completed and released two years after *Kukumi* (2005).

⁶³ This scene in particular was highly controversial and is only present in the director’s cut DVD release – but was removed from the original premiere amidst fears it would offend the UN forces stationed in Kosovo at the time. This will be discussed again later in the chapter.

towards independence – coming from a director who had previously been labelled as a Kosovan nationalist and whom we might have expected to be more in line with the political elite’s pronouncements of progress and hope in the wake of the Serb withdrawal. Instead, we witness the murder of an innocent and harmless Kukum (who with his dying words compares the world to ‘a ball of shit painted with tar’), by those proclaimed as liberators in official nation-building discourses no less and a lengthy journey undertaken by Hasan and Mara – at the end of which they come full circle and return to the only place they have ever known, the asylum.

In terms of critical literature however, there is surprisingly little coverage of *Kukumi* either in the way of film journalism or academic literature.⁶⁴ The electronically published volume *Balkan Identities, Balkan Cinemas* contains a short synopsis of the film by Richter (2008) and also a brief history of censorship in Kosovan cinema by Ajeti and Hoti (2008). The latter article contains a valuable overview of the problems endured by various Yugoslav-era Kosovan productions, including Qosja’s early work, but then misleadingly states that ‘The national cinema today enjoys democratic values and freedom of expression, and does not suffer from any form of censorship’ (2008: 76). Even at the time of writing, this claim was misleading due to the example of *Kukumi* which had a key climactic scene cut for political reasons for the domestic premiere – and likewise endured a bomb-scare at the same event.⁶⁵ Moreover, since theirs is the only academic literature available in English on Kosovan film, it is essential to begin re-dressing this void in particular with an analysis of the first post-Yugoslav Kosovan feature, *Kukumi*, a powerful allegory for the experience of the first years of Kosovan independence – structured around the dialectic potential of the road and the asylum.

⁶⁴ In terms of critical reception, the film toured some key festivals, winning prizes at both Sarajevo and Venice, which earned it a few reviews in the US film periodicals – including Young (2005) – which described the film as a ‘wrenching vision of post-1999 Kosovo’ and ‘disturbingly pessimistic’. However the film has generally been, like Marković’s *Burlesque Tragedy*, something of a victim of inadequate distribution arrangements, heightened by a difficult domestic situation which makes film promotion very challenging.

⁶⁵ The film had its original ending cut (in which Kukum is killed by a UN soldier), for fear of offending KFOR troops, for the domestic premier on the 30th of September 2005 – but nonetheless found that this event was disrupted by a bomb scare (a device was discovered underneath a vehicle in the Ministry of Culture car park). It is therefore important to complicate the previous assertion of Ajeti and Hoti (2008) and acknowledge that cultural activities in Kosovo, particularly feature film-making, have on occasion endured some difficult compromises in its contacts with political themes and practical relations with the state, particularly when the content of the film complicated or contradicted the tone of contemporary political discourse.

4.4. The road and the asylum: Thematising ‘Kosova 1999’

In one of the film’s early scenes, Kukum expresses in voiceover the prevailing optimism which met the Serbian withdrawal from Kosovo in 1999; as a celebration march passes by the now abandoned asylum, he remarks ‘we could walk freely wherever we wanted to.’ And yet by the end of the film, this freedom has brought only more painful experiences for the three protagonists, with Kukum ultimately murdered by the UN liberators and Hasan and Mara returning, despite the newfound freedom, back to the asylum for the shelter which they cannot find elsewhere. Even a quick superficial analysis of this plot sketch would clearly suggest that *Kukumi*, made six years after the time of its setting, is not a celebration of the possibility and optimism of this moment – but instead presents a rather critical and downbeat perspective on the early years of Kosovan experience post-1999. Qosja’s own comments, in the few published interviews which are available, reinforce this point:

When NATO intervened in Kosova and after the war was over, Kosova became free. Everyone was thinking that freedom would make it possible for us to do everything we wanted, go to any place that came to mind, in other words to be free. I thought people who have suffered violence and abuse by the machinery of a notorious regime would have more compassion for others... But what has really happened?! Instead they became cruel, dehumanising, losing their sympathy and manifesting freedom by denying it to others... A bizarre kind of freedom. The film is a metaphor for freedom and post-war people.⁶⁶

This pessimistic perspective is crucially structured by the use of various techniques which thematise the immediate post-war Kosovan contexts of 1999 and, subsequently, by the road movie narrative in combination with the inside-out asylum trope.

As noted, *Kukumi* opens with a title card indicating both a time and a place, ‘Kosova 1999’ – effectively year zero for the independent Kosovan state and perhaps the first year we could consider it ‘post-Yugoslav’ in a political sense (although the official declaration of independence would not come until 2008, 1999 nonetheless marked the year when a large measure of control of the province passed to UNMIK/UN Mission in Kosovo). The film’s most immediate textual effect is thus to invoke this crucial moment of post-Yugoslav transition for Kosovo – to position everything that will follow over the

⁶⁶ From an interview given by Qosja in 2011 (http://festivalonwheels.org/archive_film_cinema.aspx?id=858).

course of the film's subsequent narrative in relation to the genesis of the symbolic promise of freedom represented by this moment. In the opening scenes which follow, we are provided with an illustrative example of how the road and the asylum are then used in this context to establish a perspective on the Kosovan nation-building discourse which gathered pace following the Serb surrender to NATO in 1999.

In this early sequence, *Kukumi* gives the viewer an image of madness representing the repressed national other, first in discourses of Serbian national identity and then, more surprisingly, in newly liberated discourses of Kosovan identity. Once the Serb guards flee upon hearing news of Milošević's surrender to NATO in 1999, the inmates (all Kosovo-Albanian) are confronted with the strange prospect of release since the gates have been left open in the guards' haste to depart. They tentatively step outside the asylum gates and encounter – on the road outside – their first experience of Kosovo post-independence from the Serbs: a celebratory protest march of Kosovo-Albanians, praising the NATO intervention and waving the Albanian, British, American and NATO flags. As the parade marches past, the inmates slowly attempt to assimilate themselves into the group and join in with the celebratory chants. However, upon being noticed by the other marchers, they are immediately shunned with many of the protestors turning to hurl rocks and insults at them. That one of the marchers doing the rock-throwing actually has a somewhat milder physical disability (in fact he is the most rigorous in attacking the former asylum inmates) illustrates the point perfectly: self/other boundaries are discursively maintained and this moment represents the point at which Kosovo-Albanian national identity discourse assumes a dominant position in the public sphere now crucially defining its own marginalised other (a position Kosovan-Albanians had occupied in Serbian discourses previously). The asylum inmates, who seem to occupy the position of the unwanted and suppressed 'other' both before and after the critical moment of 1999, are treated with equal inhumanity despite this symbolic promise of change and progress that the Serb withdrawal represents for the Kosovo-Albanian majority who celebrate it. Thus the promise of a unity and solidarity offered in the Kosovan nation-building discourse prior to the 1999 'liberation' dissipates in the exact moment that such a discourse assumes a legitimate and dominant position on the 'road' of post-Yugoslav transition. Instead, as the mass of celebratory marchers violently repel the asylum inmates' wish for inclusion in the wholeness of the newly liberated national community; we are privy to a reminder that even this national discourse now

facilitates dynamics of exclusion and oppression by virtue of its newfound dominance. The asylum inmates, by functioning as a general metaphor for various kinds of ‘otherness’ (forms of being which, because of illness, trauma or even choice do not align closely with the values of various mainstream identity discourses) are thus an essential component of how *Kukumi* constructs its retrospective examination of ‘Kosova 1999’.

Thus the spatial dichotomy which defines the inside-out asylum trope is established (inside=asylum, outside=road), with the road already situated as a site of encounter where the roaming protagonists from the asylum encounter the society around them – an encounter structured as one between the hegemonic and the marginal positions of Kosovan nation-building discourse, both by the use of a large mass of people (e.g. waving national flags) for the liberation march and the relatively small number of asylum patients – and also by the power dynamics that see the former reject the latter with the threat of force. The trio of mad protagonists thereby take on a thematic function of probing and exploring the Kosovan national identity discourse – various manifestations of which are encountered on their journey throughout the film. It is the road which is to facilitate these encounters throughout the film’s narrative – while the double otherness of the protagonists (accentuating a common feature of the road movie genre), whereby they are both travellers *and* socially-marginalised by virtue of being former asylum inmates, serves to structure these encounters as a provocation of the values which bind the communities they encounter. The subsequent discussion of the film will focus on two related elements, both key to the road movie – the ultimate goal of the protagonists’ journey and their experience of the spaces and people they encounter on the way, ultimately converging on the understanding of *Kukumi* as a critical textual intersection with the Kosovan nation-building discourse of the mid 2000s. However, before continuing the analysis of *Kukumi*, I shall first introduce another post-Yugoslav title into the discussion, the Bosnian film *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003), as here we have a contemporaneous example of cinematic engagements with nation-building experiences in another of the most ideologically unstable post-Yugoslav successor states, Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose territorial and political arrangements were arguably as contested as those of Kosovo – lending us a useful point of comparison for the subsequent analysis.



Fig. 4.1. The asylum is abandoned in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)

4.4.1. Critical perspectives on post-Yugoslav nation-building in *Fuse* and *Kukumi*

Pjer Žalica's Bosnian production of *Fuse* (also discussed in the next chapter) adopts a similar narrative structure to that seen in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* wherein an extraordinary visitor to a small community prompts a thorough and critical self-assessment of the values and lives that are typical to it. In the case of *Fuse*, the visitor is US president Bill Clinton (the film is set in 1997) who visits Tešanj (a small Bosniak village where particularly brutal violence occurred during the conflicts) – prompting a mad rush on behalf of all town officials to present a 'proper' image of the town for Clinton and the attending world media – hopefully hiding the reality of unemployment, crime, and continuing ethnic tensions. In particular, the primary objective is to present a functioning and stable collective identity with political and economic structures that mirror the Western European standard which became the post-Yugoslav political aspiration for the successor states. As in *Marshall Tito's Spirit*, this process of 'clowning' around with different components of the post-war Bosnian national symbolism and the values attached to it is presented as a partly humorous affair which mainly results from the juxtaposition between the gravity of some components

of immediate post-war Bosnian nationhood (narratives of victimhood for example) and the evident arbitrariness of the nation-building process when it is here seen in ultra fast-forward (there is only two weeks to prepare for the visit).

Ultimately, since the goal of most national discourses during the Yugoslav break-up was often to establish a perennial and mythical tone for the values and group identities with which they were concerned (thus naturalising and legitimating difference), there is hence something inherently comical about seeing a post-war nation-building process enacted as methodically, hurriedly, and superficially as happens in *Fuse*. So for example, there are scenes in which the town officials design a new national flag for Clinton's visit in a meeting with the villagers (because the wartime Bosniak *fleur-de-lys* flag is now considered too provocative for continued use in a post-war context). This gives rise to a comical discussion in which a design is chosen based on the aesthetic preference of a handful of local residents, who comment on various designs as if choosing new wallpaper for their homes. Such a scene represents only the most obvious of ways in which Bosnian national identity, and the symbols, values and myths that comprise it, are thematised (or literally 'flagged' to use a word from Hjort's earlier definitions) in the film. In these scenes common visual tools for conceptualising nation are examined by the villagers due to the imperative provided by the visit. However, since these versions are so new to the residents of Tešanj (who must in two weeks present them as stable and innate pillars of their identity to the watching world), some direct instruction is required – such as the blackboard lecture shown below for example – in which adults are seated in a school classroom and instructed on their new values and national attitudes. This contradicts with more common ways in which nation is constructed and maintained – in which presupposition (as in Bilig's concept of 'banal nationalism') performs a key role. Here no presupposition is possible – every component of the national identity must be explicitly explained as quickly as possible due to the narrative pretext of Clinton's (and the global media's) pending visit – which ultimately results in a parody of the Bosnian nation-building process.

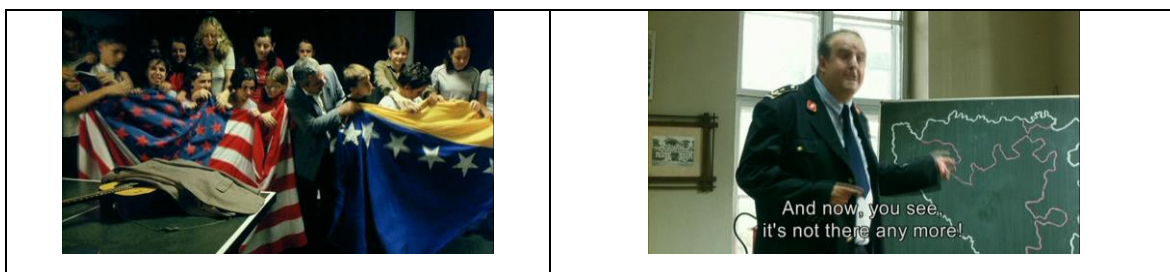


Fig. 4.2. Nation-building lessons in *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003)

Right, a local police inspector instructs citizens on their national identity while, left, confused children attempt to remember the correct patterns and colours for the Bosnian and American flags.



Fig. 4.3. Staging national identity in *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003)

The finale of *Fuse* offers a communal display of outwardly stable and singular Bosnian identity, although it is one thoroughly undermined by the preceding narrative which indicates its artificiality and irrelevance to the villagers' actual lived identities.

This brief example from *Fuse* shows how post-Yugoslav film culture functioned as a broader site for examining juxtapositions evidenced by the parallel experiences of rapid institutional and political change and the bizarre gaps created when compared with the perennial tones of some aspects of a nation-building discourse which supported their legitimacy with centuries-old imagery and mythology. In Bosnia, the most politically unstable post-Yugoslav entity – especially in the mid-2000s (along with Kosovo), films such as *Fuse* provided a satirical and critical examination of these gaps and inconsistencies between the Bosnia of official nation-building discourse and the lived reality of residents on the ground. Such a cultural feature also dominates *Kukumi*, this crucial first Kosovan film production of the post-Yugoslav period which equally probes at these gaps to expose hollow words within the official nation-building discourse, albeit in a less satirical and slightly more disturbing manner – again by virtue of the roaming inmates' encounters with the society they explore on their journey. Crucially, both Bosnia and Kosovo represent the states most in need of a drastic nation-building programme, precisely because the post-Yugoslav transition of both also entailed UN jurisdiction over the territory due to the its

highly contested nature, caught between competing territorial claims of different nationalisms. It is from this urgency – and the sorts of rhetoric it invites – that *Kukumi* arises as a means of highlighting the gaps between discursive and everyday, tangible realities.

For example, at a mid-point in the film, Kukum chances upon a local dignitary giving a speech to a crowd of villagers – exclusively old men sitting in the front row, giving an indication of a traditional, rural and patriarchal society as the audience to the dignitary’s speech. The official proclaims a prosperous future because ‘we have clever people here’ – while the camera tracks across the front row of confused elderly men, dressed in traditional clothes, and hopelessly ignorant of the modern world, with their limited but homogenous perspectives symbolised in other scenes by the plastic sunglasses worn by them, after a touring salesman has visited the town selling them. As in *Fuse*, the film offers a speech from the podium – as effective visual metaphor for the official state discourse – but equally undermined by the other subtle textual features which create a dubious gap between rhetoric and reality (in this case the ‘clever people’ of the speech and the clearly confused peasants of the front row who are unlikely to be the drivers of the modernisation promised from the podium).



Fig. 4.4. Ambitious rhetoric falling on deaf ears in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)

Top row: Bewildered peasants attend a speech promising prosperity and modernity. Below, a salesman visits the village after which inhabitants sport identical sunglasses, often while expressing their threatening disapproval of Hasan and Mara’s difference – a simple visual metaphor for a community dominated by a uniformity of conservative and closed perspectives.

Ultimately, scenes such as this present a simple but powerful juxtaposition between visions of the future offered in the rhetoric of government officials via the promises of the nation-building discourse – and the daily lived reality. In particular two forms of this juxtaposition keep re-occurring, related to the twin promises of prosperity and community, and both key to the ‘destination’ offered by Kosovan transitional nation-building discourse. Just as the vision of a prosperous Kosovo in the speech above contrasts tellingly with the immediate reality evident in the image of poor and uneducated peasants so too, the promise of a new national unity is everywhere undermined by the harsh treatment received by the three protagonists throughout their wanderings.

Kukum’s response to encountering these gaps (structured at various points throughout the film) is the most carnivalesque gesture of all – a ‘Rabelaisian’ flashing of his naked body which explosively provokes the seriousness with which such official rhetoric demands to be taken. This gesture has already been outlined in the initial scene referred to earlier in which, having been rejected by the mass of liberation marchers, Kukum delivers his idiosyncratic provocation – flashing the angry mob with his naked body. In the episode mentioned above, Kukum interrupts the political rally, by again exposing himself to the crowd and then stealing the Albanian flag from the podium – only to be pursued by security guards whereupon a lengthy chase sequence commences. In another earlier episode, he chances upon a make-shift school building maintained by UNMIK and there too flashes his naked body – provoking laughter from the children and extreme anger from the teachers and nearby guards (who, as is by now the standard pattern, sprint after Kukum with violent intent). The repetitions of these scenes reveal a similar pattern; Kukum chances upon instances whereby a make-shift podium has been erected and, finding that his presence prompts an attempt to exclude him, shows complete disrespect for the deference that such an event calls for – disturbing the speech of the podium speaker by flashing his naked body before all those gathered in attendance.



Fig. 4.5. Kukum's provocative response to exclusion in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)

Once again therefore the inside-out asylum trope facilitates a carnivalesque attempt to complicate or undermine ('demobilise') official ideologies. In *Kukumi* these encounters are facilitated by Kukum's experience of the road which brings him into contact with various enunciations of these discourses (the initial celebration march, the podiums of the political rally and the school, etc.) to which he responds with his customary non-verbal provocation – the ultimate violation of the seriousness demanded by the dominant discourse as represented by various figures in these instances (e.g., head teacher, politician). Kukum's otherness is thus a transgression of the symbolic boundaries which govern these new sites in which the Kosovan nation-building is literally happening (political rally, school, etc.) – first by virtue of his crossing of the physical boundaries which dictate where he should and shouldn't go (he enters the school 'classroom' unintended for him, he wanders up onto the podium erected for the political rally, he tries to join the liberation march, etc.) and, secondly, by then transgressing in a highly symbolic manner – adopting a response completely at odds with the interpellating demands of such discourses which require seriousness, deference, and the occasional flag waving, but certainly not the naked flashing of male genitalia. However, it is this mischievous provocation – which ultimately prompts violence as a response in each case – that exposes an ugly flipside to the reality of the new liberation – that cruelty does not *only* manifest along ethnic lines and exclusion and suffering seem to remain even in the newly liberated Kosovo.

4.4.2. From asylum... to asylum: *Kukumi* and the symbolic search for home

Having discussed Kukum's journey to some extent above, I'd like to devote the remainder of the chapter to looking at the other two protagonists, Hasan and Mara, and to consider both theirs and Kukum's journeys as both 'sidereal' and 'radical' according to the schema proposed by Baudrillard mentioned earlier whereby, in short, the former is a journey undertaken purely for its own sake – while the latter is one intended for the discovery of some sort of meaning. The first consideration is to consider Hasan and Mara's journey as a radical journey – in this case as a search for a home outside the asylum in the new Kosovo. *Kukumi*'s road movie narrative can here be briefly summarised very adequately with the critical analysis offered by Beumers – albeit with one key modification. Whereas the post-soviet films studied by Beumers evidence a nostalgic search for a 'lost home' – the protagonists of *Kukumi* are now simply searching for their *first* real home; a minor modification of a more general thematic feature of the post-socialist road movie. Thus there is no question of reclaiming that which has been lost, but rather seeking out, for the first time, something which one never previously had. The three protagonists set about exploring the Kosovo which they encounter outside the gates of their asylum – all the while seeking a home of their own within it. Hasan decides that he wishes to marry Mara and live with the family of his brother in a nearby village. The latter however, ashamed by Hasan and Mara's 'madness' (which in fact seems to be simply case of severe learning difficulties) coldly reject the young couple from their door due to fear of village gossip. The search then continues until the pair attempts to make a disused barn their home – but once again this solution does not last, again due to the hostility of the other villagers (some of whom taunt and bully Hasan by stealing and destroying his bicycle).

Thus the allegorical symbolism of the search for home is very strongly introduced within the narrative. A home is unquestionably the desired destination of the protagonists in this road movie who, in the atmosphere of optimism that surrounds the Serb surrender of 1999, hope that the promise of this political change will not prove to be illusory and superficial. Unfortunately for them, the journey ultimately proves both painful and frustrating as the allegorical power of the road delivers a vision of a society in which no fundamental changes had occurred, beyond the ethnicity of those whose identity discourse occupies the legitimate possession of the road/podium (as allegorical symbol of official

political discourse). The home, sought after by Hasan and Mara, entails not only a limited physical space providing shelter and comfort but also a degree of integration and connection with both the social world of one's neighbours and the wider landscapes one symbolically inhabits. And yet both the physical and the social aspects of home remain elusive for Hasan and Mara as a result of the conservatism of those they encounter, who refuse in each case to recognise their desire for a home as a legitimate human wish. Instead, Hasan and Mara are treated as fundamentally other in the truest sense of the word – i.e. as the one with whom no identification or common ground is possible, as the one whose humanity is thus denied.

Indeed, this elusive home is further complicated as being one of questionable value. While the villagers talked about by Gafurri and his wife attempt to resolve this problem by emigrating abroad, Hasan and Mara's search for home focuses on domestic options, their childlike innocence generating a satirical parody of the home on offer in the transitional Kosovo. When Mara, seemingly unsatisfied with the promise of marriage and children, asks Hasan what they will do once housed, Hasan matter-of-factly responds that they will do what 'everyone else does' – in short 'we'll sit by the fence and smoke, somebody greets us – and we greet them.' Hasan seeks merely to emulate those around him and achieve a degree of normality with his life – in his innocence he is unaware of the dreary tedium that this promise offers. Therefore, once again the inside-out asylum trope entails the efforts of the mad/other to assimilate into some sort of normal position within the social fabric – only, by virtue of the failure to grasp some basic naturalised logical connection, to fail in this effort and in doing so unwittingly cast the entire social fabric itself in a new light (in a similar way to the estranging performances of the escaped patients in *Burlesque Tragedy* discussed in the previous chapter).

Hasan and Mara are however not the only ones facing this difficult journey. Prior to their arrival we hear Gafurri and his wife discussing various families who have emigrated from the village in search of a better life outside of Kosovo. Meanwhile, most of the film's extensive shots of the Kosovan landscape also contain refugee convoys of rusty tractors with trailers occupied by extended families, televisions, and a few items of dirty furniture. 'Kosova 1999' is therefore presented as a desolate, barely hospitable, landscape in which a search for home occupies both major and minor characters encountered, and entails in most cases a physical journey through space. Ultimately, the focus is very much on transit – with

the difficulty of the task symbolised by the cumbersome burdens that the refugees drag behind them at snail's pace along unpaved roads – trailers full of dusty furniture and all their material possessions. As is common for the post-Yugoslav road narrative, *Kukumi* invokes the symbolism of the road only to indicate the total lack of prospects for any meaningful arrival – in this case, of any sort of new home being found at the end of the journey. In the end, Hasan and Mara have no choice but to return to the asylum.

Therefore, *Kukumi*'s conclusion with regard to this symbolic search for home is all the more telling when considered in comparison with some of the other films which also make use of the inside-out asylum trope. Whereas in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* (which, although not featuring any aspects of the road movie narrative, does nonetheless end like *Kukumi* with a view upon the escaped patient's final destination), the narrative closes with the release of the madman floating, on a boat, into the sunset, *Kukumi* ends with one of the patients having been shot dead – and the other two returning to the asylum from which their journey began. *Marshall Tito's Spirit*'s comic narrative suggests that, after numerous attempts at restraining and returning the madman to various forms of confinement (including back to the asylum), it is his ultimate release – and the reconciliation of the other characters with what that represents – that is presented as the most lasting and healthy resolution. Put simply, the narrative posits that the issues have been 'worked through' and, though at times confusing and frightening, progress (structured as a synonym for an inclusive and peaceful social collective) is nonetheless achieved by openly and finally *erasing* the symbolic boundary between inside and outside the asylum. A third comparison can be drawn with Goran Marković's *Burlesque Tragedy* in which the escaped patients are ultimately rounded up by police and taken away (and, we can assume, returned to their asylum – although this is not shown on screen). *Burlesque Tragedy* and *Kukumi* thus culminate only in a restoration of the initial status quo (a return to the asylum) while *Marshall Tito's Spirit* offers a final release of the madman into the safe haven of the sea.

Returning to *Kukumi*, we can say that, in contrast, very little optimism for the future is offered in the film. There is not a single encounter of the mental patients with the society outside that suggests a degree of change or evolution in how they are to be treated and viewed. In fact the brutality with which they are met (Gafurri attempts to rape Mara, village youths destroy Hasan's bicycle and fight him, Kukum is ultimately murdered, etc.) renders

the asylum a relative sanctuary – to which Hasan and Mara return, in the pouring rain, at the film’s close.

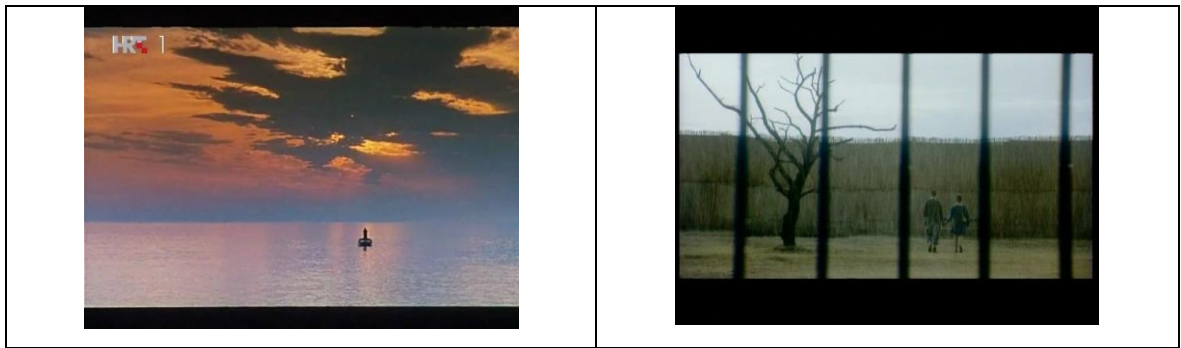


Fig. 4.6. Closing shots of *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* (Brešan, 2000) and *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)

Therefore the narrative significance attached to the notion of a destination in the road movie is in post-Yugoslav cinemas mapped as an assessment of the current state of political and cultural transition by virtue of the road movie’s various conventions that facilitate engagements with contemporaneous ‘goals’ of political discourse and prevailing social values. This is a general feature evident also in numerous other post-socialist cinemas (and indeed various non-post-socialist cinemas). However, the inside-out asylum trope brings an added significance to the notion of destination by ultimately structuring it as a binary – either a return to the asylum or a symbolic erasure of the boundary which defines it (a symbolic dissolution of the asylum so to speak). The destination is ultimately therefore a question of whether or not the conditions which necessitated and maintained the asylum have been discovered to be changing as a result of post-Yugoslav transitions (encountered on the ‘road’), which then predicates whether or not the asylum will once again house its inmates at the narrative’s climax. This hybridic combination of the road and the asylum in *Kukumi* thereby necessitates the conclusion that this first ever feature film of the post-Yugoslav Kosovo is an extremely pessimistic and subdued reflection back over the first years of independence – in which the biggest disappointment comes in the shock that, despite perceptions of Kosovo-Albanian national unity fostered during the years of Serbian authority over Kosovo, the withdrawal of the latter does not ensure an end to cruelty and oppression but instead only a new configuration of social power and exclusion.

4.4.3. *Kukumi* and the experience of movement, space and territory

The final point of the analysis will focus on Hasan, Mara and Kukum's journey from another point of view – rather than looking at it relative to the destination, I would like to now consider how it constructs a particular relation to the surrounding spaces through which the inmates pass, which ultimately results in a further perspective on the nation-building discourse – the kindling of emotive bonds with spaces which become understood as national territory. *Kukumi* features numerous shots of expansive natural landscapes – traditionally also often a key component of national discourses and highly relevant in the context of post-Yugoslav transitions (in which such issues were paramount owing to the fact that Yugoslav post-socialism entailed a series of, in-part, territorially-motivated conflicts). The extended focus on landscape both as backdrop to narrative developments and, particularly in *Kukumi*, as momentary pause in the advancement of narrative, is therefore a crucial aspect of how this post-Yugoslav title engages the national imaginary. It is worth elaborating on this use of landscape as it is another means by which we can read the films relative to the aforementioned 'search for home' as allegory for transition. This section will therefore focus on landscape and space in *Kukumi*, in particular paying attention to the escaped inmates' journey as a sidereal journey (i.e. not discussing the journey in terms of its destination, but rather in terms of the simple experience of movement and space entailed therein).

Firstly, it should be noted that *Kukumi* contains frequent and lengthy shots of the Kosovan landscape, sometimes accompanied by a mournful and elegiac flute melody and a sequence of long takes, producing an overwhelmingly sombre tone. The presence of these shots thus invites a consideration of the film in terms of its mediation between humans and their natural environmental surroundings – in particular, between the spaces (landscapes) of the film, explicitly marked as national by various narrative features, and those who inhabit them. In essence, the issue is one of human investment towards place and space (i.e. rather than 'nature' we are shown 'landscape'). The prominent and mournful flute melody (or, on other occasion, vocal melody) which re-occurs throughout invites precisely this consideration of the emotional response and investment that these landscape shots might invoke.

According to various theories of film spectatorship, it is possible to conceptualise the viewer's cognitive activity as taking place in two modes – 'narrative' and 'spectacle'.

The former relates to the cognitive processing of narrative information (events, agents, chronology, cause-and-effect) while the latter instead activates a more voyeuristic pleasure-taking in the seductive power of the image. In effect, this model of spectatorship is an attempt to integrate the most useful components of both psychoanalytic and cognitive models of spectatorship so as to be able to more fully account for the workings of modern fictional film. Lefebvre's (2006) writing on the consequences of using such landscape shots within a fictional feature narrative is here useful in conceptualising their effects. Lefebvre writes of cinematic spectatorship as an activity which operates in two modes, each called upon in turn by the nature of the images in a particular moment. These modes are the 'narrative mode' and the 'spectacular mode':

Spectators watch the film at some points in the narrative mode and at others in the spectacular mode, allowing them to both follow the story *and*, whenever necessary, to contemplate the filmic spectacle. It is necessary, however, to emphasise that one cannot watch the same filmic passage through both modes at the same time... This is why it can be said that spectacle halts the progression of narrative for the spectator. (2006: 29)⁶⁷

Hence the extended shots which feature either primarily or only the Kosovan wilderness invite consideration of something more than mere narrative setting – whereby these vistas are here the main focus of the spectator's attention. Consequently, the manner of engagement with the spectator – or rather, the mode of spectatorship which is here activated – is the aforementioned 'spectacle' mode of viewing. These shots temporarily (but repeatedly in *Kukumi*) suspend the narrative flow and invite a contemplation of the object presented as spectacle in a moment freed from narrative temporality. That this landscape is presented – without the spectator being simultaneously required to process narrative information and events – allows for an affective response to these shots. The question then becomes; since *Kukumi* clearly thematises affective relationships with space, what type of emotional response might these images prompt and how might this response be situated relative to film's wider cinematic engagement with transition experiences?

⁶⁷ Interestingly, Lefebvre likens these cinematic moments to those discussed by Laura Mulvey from classical Hollywood cinema, in which the woman's body provides the spectacle that interrupts narrative time and activates the 'spectacular mode' of viewing.

The most obvious point is that the focus on the extremely barren and dusty nature of these hills and fields generally emphasises the sheer magnitude of the task facing the protagonists seeking a home within this wilderness; this is not an easy place in which to live. However, these shots are also visually striking with the compositions often featuring stylised colour contrasts (for example, between the primary colours of the landscape and the protagonists' clothes) and a harsh simplicity, wherein the landscapes are relatively featureless, with monolithic hills and plains often filling the frame.⁶⁸ Thus *Kukumi*'s visual presentation of these landscapes is one which incorporates romanticising strategies (through compositional arrangements and the use of a musical score) that stress the potential of these spaces to inspire affective and sensory responses – above and beyond the mere appropriation of them as territory. However, it is only the escaped patients who are shown to be capable of engaging with the surrounding spaces in such a manner. Despite the difficulties of their journey and the various frustrations it brings – one of the only sources of peace and pleasure for the three comes in the moments when they take a time out from moving – and bond with the space around them at a sensory level (see screenshots below). In other words, the only moments of their journey which don't involve suffering are those where they too take a break from the narrative 'goal' of searching for a home – and instead pause to engage their own 'spectacle' mode before the landscapes around them, allowing for an affective response to a space which is not (for them) structured as national territory but rather as a site for a universal and spiritual experience that transcends cultural and national formations.

Indeed, the asylum inmates' unique approach to space extends also to their means of moving through it with Hasan in particular repeatedly trying to harness his creativity in order to experience space in an exhilarating new way. Initially, upon leaving the asylum he chances upon some railway tracks and makes use of a rail repair cart to transport Kukum, Mara and himself through the countryside – an experience which, judging by the trio's exclamations of delight, is a novel and pleasing sensory one. Later on Hasan builds a home-made tandem bike for himself and Mara, only to have it destroyed by malicious local youths. Towards the film's close he steals a horse in order to pull a rusted and broken down train carriage along the tracks – but is once again chased away and beaten by local

⁶⁸ It is perhaps of relevance here that Qosja also has some experience as a painter, which might possibly be relevant in his presentation of landscape in these shots – he has not, thus far however, been asked much about this in published interviews.

villagers. These moments of exhilarating motion are integral to the protagonists' experience of the spaces through which they pass – and are also one key aspect by which their behaviour differs from that of the other 'sane' characters, placing them in stark contrast to various other characters encountered along the road, who generally seek to enforce territorial boundaries and eject Kukum/Mara/Hasan from spaces over which they have some sort of jurisdiction (for example, the repeated closing of the door to Hasan at Gafurri's house whereby Gafurri's wife seeks to deny them access to the home).



Fig. 4.7. Hasan, Mara and Kukum 'feel' the landscape in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)



Fig. 4.8. Hasan's efforts to generate new spatial experiences in *Kukumi* (Qosja, 2005)

Along with the aforementioned empty landscape shots which suspend the flow of narrative time, these assorted scenes comprise a significant portion of the film and indicate two of the film's most central and intertwined themes (generated by *Kukumi*'s use of a road movie narrative structure): the sensory experience of space and the affective response to landscape. Iordanova (2010) writes of so-called peripheral cinemas:

place takes on an equal role to that of the *protagonist*. Location now functions not only as a plot device but also provides a symbolic framework within the film's diegesis. Liminal, tangential, or even extreme borderlands function as the setting for narratives that signify isolation and marginality, presuppose a context of frontier and displacement, or re-mythologise peripheral histories... (2010: 13).

Indeed, *Kukumi* is a pertinent (road movie) example of such cinema, in which the use of place and space is absolutely fundamental, although, in the pre-modernised Kosovo depicted, this ‘road’ is really more of a dusty track and the protagonists, rather than using the archetypal symbol of the road movie in Hollywood versions of the genre (the automobile), instead must improvise their own tools for transport to aid them in their quest for home-(land) – be it a customised home-made tandem bike, a horse-drawn rusting railway carriage or whatever else. As noted earlier, Vidan (2011) has written that ‘one of the dominant trends in post 1991 cinema of the region is the exploration of space both as narrative and as political category’ (2011: 174), pointing out that whereas ‘goal-defined movement and unquestioned purpose’ was a definitive feature of most Yugoslav-era genres (such as partisan films), more recent films suggest ‘the possibility of [spatial] appropriation seems elusive’ (2011: 188). *Kukumi* is yet another example fitting into this broad trend, an example of a road movie in which the experience of place and space is a central focus – suggestively allegorising the Kosovan transition experience post-1999.⁶⁹ However, rather than only suggesting that the appropriation of space might be elusive, Qosja’s film instead implies that the full range of possibility might contain *more* than the simple act of appropriation – but that, aside from a few escaped lunatics who are ultimately beaten, murdered, and rejected, these opportunities to re-define the relationship to space and landscape are being wasted in the fledging Kosovo.

4.5. Conclusions

Ultimately, with *Kukumi* it is not even a case of ‘travelling and not arriving’ as in most of the post-Yugoslav titles discussed by Vidan (2011). Instead, the symbolic journey as allegory of transition results in an even more pessimistic perspective on the post-1999 experience, evidenced by the return to the asylum with which the film closes. Rather than expressing a malaise that the post-Yugoslav and post-socialist transition is ongoing, *Kukumi* suggests that the transition – in terms of a process of progressive change – was, at least in 2005, yet to really begin. So-called transition – as a process of economic development and the raising of standards of living – is briefly shown to be both an explicit

⁶⁹ This prominence of journey narratives has continued to be the case with subsequent Kosovan cinema after *Kukumi*, in particular with titles such as *Donkeys of the Border* (Ahmetaj, 2010) and the short *The Wedding Tape* (Shaban, 2011), despite output levels being rather modest due to lack of funding (currently around one feature is produced each year).

goal of the post-Yugoslav Kosovan establishment, and simultaneously an area of current failure. However, the more important issue (the one which, thematically, commands the greatest degree of attention) is the question of socio-cultural transition; here the ultimate goal is a society in state of openness to individual difference and consequently one in which each member can freely explore and define their own feelings and relations with the material and social fabrics which are necessary to construct a new home in a post-Yugoslav Kosovo. The asylum, which at the start of the film stands as evidence of intolerance, inequality, and a narrow-mindedness regarding acceptable forms of behaviour and identity, is abandoned in the hopeful optimism of 1999, after the departure of Serbian forces. And yet by the end of the film, its persistence – as the only acceptable destination for Hasan and Mara – is the most suggestively powerful reminder that true transition was neither completed nor even guaranteed by the Serb withdrawal. Rather, it signalled the need for a cultural exploration and negotiation of the meanings of this new freedom, as a foundational pre-requisite, for building a different – more inclusive and supportive – home, where a greater range of possibility is afforded to all the inhabitants of Kosovo.

Kukumi is therefore a significant production, not only for being the first Kosovan production of the post-Yugoslav era and also marking the resumption of the career of Isa Qosja after a 17-year hiatus, but equally for its nuanced perspective on its contemporary contexts of Kosovo in the mid-2000s. Still very much mired in transition and under UN jurisdiction at the time (but with domestic political elites building towards the declaration of independence that would come eventually in 2008) and having experienced over a decade and a half of contention over its sovereignty, Qosja's film structures an engagement with the contemporary Kosovan nation-building discourse that probes at inconsistencies and exposes gaps in rhetoric and reality that belie hypocrisies and double-standards. What makes this critical engagement possible is precisely the allegorical power of the asylum and its inmates, who encounter this discourse and its enactment within various spaces along their road journey – all the while presenting a fundamental challenge to the national/nation-building discourse by virtue of their otherness. Ultimately, *Kukumi* is a film which calls for a subtle but essential realisation that a home is not only (or even primarily?) a delineated physical space/territory – but also entails a social element which must be negotiated and maintained in the interactions of a community, practices best examined critically in its

encounters with outsiders. It is to this end that *Kukumi*'s critical assessment of the immediate post-Yugoslav nation-building discourse in Kosovo is addressed.

Section 2: Affective perspectives on post-Yugoslav trauma: the fragmentation of diegetic unity

Chapter 5:

Madness and the conventional representation of trauma: Objective vs. subjective realities

5.1. Introduction

History has shown that intensely traumatic periods spawned more narratives and images, rather than less... While it shatters the culture's symbolic resources, trauma also points to the urgent necessity of reconfiguring and transforming the broken repertoire of meaning and expression. (Kaplan and Wang, 2004: 12)

The first thesis section examined the so-called 'inside-out asylum' trope across a number of post-Yugoslav titles as a primarily allegorical mode of critical engagement with the immediate political and social contexts arising from the break-up of the SFRY and the dismantling of socialism as the structuring ideology of economic, cultural and political life. Coming often in the very immediate aftermath of particularly significant upheavals (i.e. very early in the respective transition process for the successor republics in question, often during or just after armed conflict) these inside-out asylum tropes staged a destabilising and carnivalesque play with the loaded signifiers of dominant political ideologies at a time when the range of prevalent discursive approaches to these ideologies was still rather narrow. Consequently, the primary cultural function of these tropes is derived from the use of madness as an estranged or 'othered' social performance which introduces a semantic instability to the textual, verbal, visual, or gestured signifiers around which these dominant transition ideologies were structured (e.g. Milošević's militaristic nationalism in *Burlesque Tragedy* for example).

The second section of the thesis will shift the focus to a different textual feature equally evident in a number of post-Yugoslav films (sometimes found within the same films as the aforementioned inside-out asylum trope, but more often not) – namely representations of unstable mental states arising from experiences of the post-Yugoslav transition, in particular the use of multiple and highly subjective on-screen realities, within a single film, as a way of conceptualising the consequences of traumatic experience (*Land*

of Truth, Love and Freedom, South by Southwest, Fuse, Mirage, Contact, Loving Glances). The argument here is that the most common method for conceptualising traumatic experience in post-Yugoslav cinemas (outside of narrative and dialogic exposition) has been through the use of these inconsistent diegetic worlds, indicating the fragmented subjective realities of characters experiencing the after-effects of trauma. Chapters 5 and 6 explore this ‘multiple realities’ trope of madness focusing on images of hallucination, divergent perceptions of time and space, and other techniques for translating trauma into the audio-visual medium. Again Bakhtin’s work on the chronotope will provide an interpretive framework for distinguishing between the nuances of the trope (between chapter 5 and chapter 6) and here the discussion will also be supported by certain key works on the subject of trauma, narrative and visual arts (Caruth, 1996). Ultimately, the discussion here is on a second common trope – orientated around madness as perceptual instability and hence subjective malfunctions of the processing of experience into knowledge – whose primary function lies in the articulation of traumatic experience within the audio-visual medium.

The core focus for this section of the thesis is to examine how madness has provided conceptual tools for engaging with traumatic experiences in post-Yugoslav cinemas. In order to adequately address this primary enquiry it will be necessary to consider how traumatic experience has been translated into the inherently audio-visual and narrative driven conventions of feature film, and, which similarities and variables are evident in a comparison of these tropes across differing post-Yugoslav successor cultures, either in terms of the formal techniques for rendering trauma on screen – or in the contours of which events and experiences precisely constituted the essences of trauma. Ultimately the goal is to highlight how certain cultural conceptions of madness (here, as we shall see, based upon perceptual instability and a flawed internal interface between experience and knowledge) can serve the purpose of engaging with traumatic experience – and to outline the specifics of such dynamics in post-Yugoslav cinemas.

As the thesis material is organised around recognition of textual trends (tropes) within the post-Yugoslav cinemas, the two chapters that comprise this section will be divided according to what I consider to be the most crucial structural distinction evident in how this ‘multiple realities’ trope is used across the films in question: namely, the spectators’ relation to these multiple realities – itself an effect produced by the degree to

which they are demarcated as separate by each film's narrative operation. This chapter will focus on more conventional, and frequently-used, forms of the trope wherein a subjective reality perceived by an individual character is situated within a stable and objective diegetic reality, both of which are shown to the viewer (*Fuse, Mirage, Contact, Loving Glances*) in a strictly ordered hierarchy (i.e. it is clear which is which). Chapter 6 will turn attention to the no-budget DIY films of Serbian film lecturer and all-round filmmaker Milutin Petrović – in which a greater number of narrative layers are employed – all of which are far less clearly demarcated from each other than in the films to be discussed in this chapter. It is in the films of Petrović that the perceptual instability at the heart of the 'multiple realities' trope is also extended to the spectators' relation to the text – thus offering a more radical cinematic engagement with trauma.

Both the general discussion of the 'multiple realities' trope of madness as it occurs across all these films – and the distinguishing nuances between its instances in Chapters 5 and 6 – will be organised, in part, using Bakhtin's notion of the 'Chronotope' as an approach to cultural texts in which the specificity of time-space configurations enacted by the text can be discussed. As will be shown throughout the subsequent chapters, what defines the multiple-realities trope of madness is precisely the narrative's integration of multiple intra-diegetic time-space configurations – or multiple chronotopes within a single text. Following Bakhtin's suggested flexibilities in identifying multiple chronotopes within written texts and suggestion that they need not always occupy the same level of significance or prevalence throughout the narrative, we might come to think of the multiple-realities trope of madness as a specific master chronotope within post-Yugoslav cinemas, defined precisely by its inclusion and arrangement of constituent and multiple minor chronotopes.

However, before entering into the discussion of such tropes at either a general level (across multiple texts) or specific instances of it within individual works, it is first necessary to outline some of the key theoretical matters which will frame the discussion in both this chapter and the next. Thus the next section will aim firstly to establish a brief conceptual definition of trauma before considering how two aspects in particular, both of which are inherently predisposed to cinematic adaptation (narrative disruption and hallucination), relate to various notions of madness. Thereafter, I shall include an outline of

some current trends in the study of trauma and cinema before finally moving into the specifics of these post-Yugoslav examples.

5.2. Trauma, madness and audio-visual narrative media: Tracing a theoretical interface

5.2.1. Trauma, madness, and knowledge

The visual media have become a cultural institution in which the traumatic experience of modernity can be recognised, negotiated, and reconfigured. (Kaplan and Wang, 2004: 17)

Where do trauma and madness intersect? What is it about both that makes them of such interest within visual media? How are clinical concepts around the former filtered through cultural notions of the latter and adapted by filmmakers for the screen? What, in the first instance, is trauma?

The last question, first. Most theoretical accounts of trauma begin with Freud and psychoanalysis – interestingly, the first concerted attempt to ‘listen’ to madness (i.e. analyse its utterances), equally significantly, providing a major early theoretical model for schematising trauma. It is here that trauma is first systematically characterised in terms of a psychic response to a particular event or experience in which the constitutive essence lies in the subsequent arrival of certain symptoms rather than being necessarily predicated by the nature of the original event itself. In other words, trauma is a *subjective* affliction – its contours and symptoms capable of significant variations even among people for whom the same original event or experience might represent a shared trigger. Nonetheless, there are demonstrable and undeniable patterns when it comes to identifying which types of events are liable to be causes of trauma – most of which have to do with a severe threat to the integrity or security of the subject, ranging from various forms of physical danger and the prospect of death right through to sudden and increased exposure to potentially-fatal threats such as illness, abuse or loss of economic or social security. Trauma thus becomes the psychic consequence experienced by the subject after exposure to the threat of a literal (or symbolic) death for which it was unprepared; a moment which thereby overwhelms the subject’s resources for processing lived experience, undermining the very foundations upon which the sense of self has been based. In the psychoanalytic literature, this shocking

experience – rather than being processed rationally in thought and language – causes a sensory and cognitive overload which prevent such a process from taking place. Instead, the experience leaves subconscious traces which then re-surface as a variety of symptoms at a later date – the nature of which often depends on the subject’s circumstances and subsequent experiences. A foremost writer on trauma, and its relation to cultural texts, is Caruth who writes:

Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature – the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance – returns to haunt the survivor later on. (Caruth, 1996: 4)

The very reason for this ‘unassimilated nature’ is that trauma is not so much a wound of the body, as of the mind – Caruth, again drawing on Freud’s cornerstone texts on the subject, continues:

the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world – is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that... is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. (Caruth, 1996:4)

The traumatic experience involves a shock or threat so great that the subject’s response is partially dissociative, experiencing the event outside of oneself. Kaplan and Wang summarise a key study in developing understandings of this aspect of trauma:

Van der Kolk and Van der Hart give a vivid description of the dissociated definition of trauma. Working with neuroscientists, they show brain mechanisms that support the thesis of trauma-induced, dissociated selves. In their notion of trauma as a special form of memory, the traumatic experience has affect only, not meaning. It produces emotions – terror, fear, shock, and above all the disruption of the normal feelings of comfort. Only the sensation sector of the brain is active during trauma. The meaning-making faculty – rational thought and cognitive processing, namely, the cerebral cortex – remains shut down because the affect is too much to be registered cognitively in the brain. Since the experience has not been given meaning, the subject is continually haunted by it in dreams, flashbacks and hallucinations. (Kaplan and Wang, 2004: 5)

It is in this dissociated aspect of the traumatic experience that the first of two (interrelated) significant intersections with madness can be elaborated. On the psychic level, because of the aforementioned dissociation that in part defines it, the traumatic experience is one in which the rational and knowable self is briefly negated – meaning that the event is experienced on a predominantly subconscious, emotional and sensory level. Trauma is thereby, quite literally, a maddening moment in terms of its radical destabilising of the subject's sense of a unified self and, equally, in terms of the subsequent difficulty in 'knowing oneself' that is presented after the fact. In the subsequent symptoms that Freud would have characterised as the return of repressed remnants of the experience, the subject is thirdly maddened – experiencing compulsions, desires, and thoughts the root of which often presents a mystery for the subject.

Aside from this dissociative dimension of trauma which brings the subconscious into play and effects a 'splitting' of the sense of self, there is a second crucial interface with madness which bears some significance for the later discussion of post-Yugoslav cinemas:

What the parable of the wound and voice tell us...is that trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in an attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth in its delayed appearance and its belated address cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and language...

The accident... does not simply represent the violence of a collision but also conveys the impact of its very incomprehensibility. What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but *also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known.* [Italic emphasis added] (Caruth, 1996: 4-5)

These passages from Caruth point to this second interface between madness and trauma – hinging upon the challenge presented by trauma for the subject's cyclical processes of evaluating experience to produce knowledge about itself and the world which, in turn, then provides the basis for how subsequent experience will be incorporated with existing knowledge. Trauma is precisely that type of experience which completely overloads such cognitive processing by virtue of the fact that it, in some crucially fundamental way,

undermines the essential foundations of existing knowledge which are inadequate – even ill-designed – as a basis for assimilating the traumatic moment into subsequent knowledge. Because the knowledge attempt is essentially a narrative process (whereby the new experience/information is connected, under normal circumstances, in a relation with what is pre-existing), trauma's unknowability is from this perspective a result of the inadequacy of the subject's already-existing strategies for narrativisation, to which there must always be some limit (and thus the potential for a transgression thereof). Furthermore, as an experience which violates the existing systems for knowledge production, trauma introduces this doubt and uncertainty into the processing of later experience by virtue of the common symptom of hallucinations and flashbacks (not – in practice – exclusively visual however, despite the cinematic conventions which will later be discussed) thereby erasing some of the underlying pre-suppositions (including a distinction between an external objective world and subjective figments of the imagination) that make the cyclical knowledge processing possible. Thus, herein lays the second essential interface with madness – which, as Fuery (2004) outlines below, is a core component of knowledge-production serving the vital function of enabling boundaries and foundations of knowledge to be maintained through a ceaseless but productive probing:

What are the limits of knowledge? Where do we find that moment when knowledge collapses and its otherness is found? And what would we find beyond such limits, beyond knowledge and meaning? Madness will test knowledge to its limits; not just what is known and knowable, but how some things become located as knowledge. This is one of the forces of madness, of how it contests understanding and meaning, of its resistances to knowledge. For, in this force of madness we find knowledge's Other and a construction of knowledge outside itself. This is because madness declares knowledge in its processes of non-meaning and makes systems of knowledge question themselves. For in madness, knowledge is not so much negated, but rather tested and questioned. Its limits are found through the process of challenging those aspects that allow knowledge to stand... (2004: 113)

In the heightened challenge to knowledge production presented by trauma's disruption of narrative capacities and perceptual certainties, madness becomes a necessity of the attempt to process or integrate this unknowable component in the task of re-constituting a stable and unified self. As Hunt (2010) has written

A traumatic event, by definition, breaks down the accepted social and personal structures and belief systems of the individual... any treatment must try to re-build their belief system, not one that is identical to the pre-trauma system, but one that includes the new knowledge provided by the traumatic event. (2010: 10)

Madness, as evidence of the knowledge-production process in action, is thus a potentially vital – if temporary – sign that the processing attempt is in action although the completion of the process can only be marked by the ultimate recess of madness as a state induced by the knowledge production attempt. Fuery's summary of the angle from which psychoanalysis approaches madness could thus be equally extended to those interested in making sense of trauma:

This is why ideas such as the return of the repressed, the somatic manifestations of mental disturbances in hysteria, the wish fulfilment nature of dreams, even the Oedipal complex and theories of sexuality – in short the vast foundations of psychoanalysis – at one level operate to track the symptoms of madness back to some sort of reality. In such an interpretive model, reality becomes the source pool to give meaning to mad episodes, and at the same time madness is employed to make sense of versions of reality (2004: 159)

The 'tracking back to reality' is a potent expression for the subjective compulsion to process lived experience into some relation with the already-existing sense of self, others, and with understandings of the external world – in short, the need for, and attempt to forge, meaning from the raw inputs of lived experience; a process which traumatic experience so emphatically disrupts and challenges.

5.2.2. Introducing cinema to the equation

I would now consider in what ways film could be understood as a text which negotiates traumatic experiences. How does madness intervene within such processes? I will first offer a broader sketch in response to this before moving specifically into the post-Yugoslav case.

From the outset it should be noted that film has an inherent suitability as a cultural medium for exploring traumatic themes from various angles for two reasons. Firstly, as a medium which incorporates time in various ways (both the time of watching and also various intra-diegetic temporalities), the fictional genres of feature film are by convention

completely dependent on various narrative structures and techniques for their meaning-making to function. Since temporality and narrative are also at the core of how we understand and define trauma, it becomes clear that the various conventions of narrative-driven feature film provide a diverse array of potential tools for approaching themes of trauma on screen. Secondly, because feature fiction cinema (to a greater extent than other forms of moving or still image) relies upon – and even exploits – an audience’s liability to slip into a cognitive confusion whereby one responds to fabricated events shown in images as if they were real ones unfolding before their very eyes,⁷⁰ therein lies an equally vital resource for exploring the hallucinatory and perceptually inconsistent consequences of trauma. Throughout the subsequent discussion of post-Yugoslav cinemas, I will argue that by paying close attention to these textual elements of films, we can chart the specifics of how they engage trauma at a conceptual level, how they portray its specific post-Yugoslav manifestations – and how madness serves as a prism for doing so.

After various high-profile debates about the ethics of representing traumatic experience culturally – a significant portion of which was specifically prompted by the post-WWII context in which legacies of the Holocaust were being culturally worked out – the co-ordinates of the discussion have in recent years moved away from whether or not one *should* attempt such a representation at all, and now focus more on how best one *could* translate traumas into various cultural media with an awareness of the ethical and representational challenges which are inherently always bound up in such a task.⁷¹ As in clinical texts on the psychology of trauma⁷² the focus in cultural studies with regard to trauma has also, to a significant extent, prioritised the study of narrative within texts that focus upon trauma as a theme not only as a means of elaborating precisely how trauma is understood within the text in question – but also for drawing further conclusions about how texts might act in some way upon trauma (perhaps at the risk of over-stretching this

⁷⁰ This evident but difficult to explain aspect of spectatorship has been extensively theorised using psychoanalytically informed models of the cinema-viewer (in the work of Metz (1974), for example) while more recent studies have sought to adjust and develop these models with the inputs of neurological and cognitive sciences (as in the work of Bordwell (1985) for instance). On this issue Fuery writes: ‘In cinema, as with madness, the force of the reality created through the delusions is based on meaningfulness. And the cinema spectator, like the mad person, is the primary agent in creating this sense of meaning as they become immersed in the signifiers, the illusions and their passions. Certainly there are the culturally shared and constructed meanings and experiences; there are those elements that interpellate at the level of the social, including the ideological functions. There are also those that bond the group of spectators together. Yet none of this runs against the idea that primary to the act of spectating is this relationship of meaning, reality, and delusion.’ (2004: 159)

⁷¹ See Le Roy et al. (2011) for an efficient summary of these issues.

⁷² See for example Crossley (2000) as one potential example of many.

medical metaphor, the issue is to what extent culture can be understood as therapeutic in relation to trauma). Whether in the context of literature studies⁷³ or film studies, there is nonetheless an understanding of the limits of representation that emerges from a number of key studies whereby even this crucial strategy for approaching and dealing with trauma is fated to fall short of an adequate or total resolution of the traumatic symptoms:

Even though narrative has the therapeutic value of warding off the compulsive repetition of a trauma, it does not lead to its total redemption or to the full restoration of the subject's past as an autonomous, un-affected unity. (Le Roy et al., 2011: 260)

On top of this representational limit, which must always be re-configured in the light of varying media practices, modes and conventions as well as in relation to specific historic contexts around traumatic experiences, there is a second crucial issue to bear in mind when analysing cultural narratives and trauma. Not all narratives work with traumatic experience in the same way, and not all narratives are motivated in this engagement in the same way. In the above-quoted *Arcadia* special edition on trauma in theatre and film, LeRoy, Christel and Verdoodt in their introduction cite Butler's and Saal's work on post 9/11 narratives in mainstream American politics and media as a case in point, whereby 'after 9/11 the mourning work of the injured nation quickly transformed into a celebration of the strong, united, and retaliatory nation.' (2011: 261). By way of a critical framework for distinguishing differing narrative strategies for approaching trauma the authors go on to cite the commonly used Freudian model of 'mourning and melancholia' as contrasting responses to loss, outlining 'the relation between the so-called 'healthy' work of mourning and the 'pathological' melancholia...

The latter is similar to nostalgic 'narrative memory', against which LaCapra warned or the 'narcissistic narrative' that, according to Butler, leads to 'closure'. In mourning, loss is countered by the forgetting of the loss while the melancholic subject 'incorporates' its loss, staying attached to it. Mourning infused with melancholia doesn't erase but bears the traces of loss. Hagstrom-Stahl sees the work of mourning as a process of dealing with loss without completely erasing its traces... (2011: 261)

⁷³ See for example the aforementioned work of Caruth in this field, as well as LaCapra (1994) and also Tal (1996).

Such a critical model for characterising varying narrative strategies for engaging trauma will be employed further on in relation to the post-Yugoslav titles in question. However, before doing so it is worth first just noting the approaches of certain preceding studies of both trauma and film which adopt a similar focus as the one to follow, before also briefly discussing post-Yugoslav traumas within a variety of cultural manifestations.

There is a growing body of scholarship on various film texts which synthesises an analysis of representations of historical traumas which have shaped and affected entire societies and the focus on the individually-felt consequences of these great upheavals. Anton Kaes's *Shell Shock Cinema* (2009) deals with the early examples of Weimar cinema in which various aesthetic and narrative techniques were employed for exploring the histories of the First World War through the individual perspective. Even in these early films, often aesthetically different from modern cinema simply due to technological constraints (black and white film stock and cameras, no synchronised audio, etc.) there is evidence of an emphasis on narrative disruptions and hallucinatory episodes within the diegesis (established as a layering of different subjective realities) for purposes of rendering trauma on the screen. Blake (2008) and Lowenstein (2005) meanwhile both focus on the modern horror genre (Blake looking at more mainstream titles in her monograph while Lowenstein chooses texts from the experimental and 'art-house' range of the spectrum) but again there is a concerted effort to chart the traces of momentous historical shocks (from the Holocaust and Hiroshima to Vietnam and 9/11) within popular film, examining how the ethical and practical challenges to representation presented by such events are negotiated therein.⁷⁴ The remainder of this thesis section proposes to attempt a shorter, but similarly-concerned, assessment in the post-Yugoslav context.

It should be noted that no systematic comparative study of trauma or PTSD in post-Yugoslav film culture has to date been published. In fact, due to the ongoing disputes and discrepancies which exist in competing official discourses on war-time events (of either political or military nature), even the recognition of war veterans in a legal sense (by welfare systems for instance) is loaded with implications for the wider narratives of guilt and responsibility. It is thus not surprising that in such a situation, the recognition of trauma (often the first step towards various methods for alleviating its symptoms and damage) has

⁷⁴ A similar approach to historical trauma in visual culture can also be seen in Berry (2008).

not been a high priority issue in some post-Yugoslav successor states.⁷⁵ Unsurprisingly, this has also acted as somewhat of a hindrance to the production of a systematic study of trauma within post-Yugoslav cultures so that current studies have tended to be focused on individual and often more high-profile (i.e. with some international success and exposure) titles – these will be discussed in turn throughout the later text-based discussion of varying textual strategies for representing trauma (where there is also some corresponding research on the text in question).⁷⁶

Finally, before moving onto the post-Yugoslav films in question for this chapter it is worth outlining one of the key concepts which is to inform the subsequent discussion of how various narrative strategies approach trauma in these films, Bakhtin's notion of the 'chronotope'. The necessity of this is best illustrated by starting with a quote from Kaes (2009), who outlines the representational challenge that such fundamentally radical war-time experiences presented to Weimar filmmakers:

The modern war challenged older forms of representation. A realism that implied a familiarity with and affirmation of one's surroundings could not capture the eerie and alienating desolation of the battlefield, the anonymous mass killing, the permanent threat of poison gas, machine guns, and bombs. Technological warfare had destroyed the natural landscape and turned entire regions into no-man's-land. The battlefields looked empty, with soldiers hiding in their dugouts and all movement restricted for fear of exposure...

Stripped of all contingencies and ambiguities in the life-and-death situation of the front, the world, radically reduced to its bare essentials, had become more abstract. The war demanded a new aesthetics. (2009: 81)

I will argue that this challenge for finding a 'new aesthetics' has been met in various ways in terms of strategies that manipulate multiple intra-diegetic temporalities within differing narrative layers of the text, thus forming the basis of this 'multiple realities' trope of madness. As in some other studies of trauma and cinema⁷⁷, Bakhtin's chronotope offers an analytical tool for uncovering the working of these interacting spatio-temporal

⁷⁵ See Dokić (2009). Other rare examples of research into PTSD from within post-Yugoslav successor states can be found in Biro and Milin (2005).

⁷⁶ It is noteworthy for example that visual media relating to the events of 9/11 or subsequent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq have received a greater level of attention within a specific trauma framework than the experiences of Yugoslav break-up in the 1990s – although perhaps this has as much to do with the relatively recent (mid 1990s onwards) major expansion of trauma studies as an academic field of enquiry as anything else.

⁷⁷ See for example the aforementioned work of Berry (2008).

configurations within the master narratives of these films. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin writes of the chronotope:

They are the organising centres for the fundamental narrative events of the novel. The chronotope is the place where the knots of narrative are tied and untied. It can be said without qualification that to them belongs the meaning that shapes narrative.

Thus the chronotope, functioning as the primary means for materialising time in space, emerges as a centre for concretising representation, as a force giving body to the entire novel. All the novel's abstract elements – philosophical and social generalisations, ideas, analyses of cause and effect – gravitate toward the chronotope and through it take on flesh and blood, permitting the imagining power of art to do its work. Such is the representational significance of the chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1982: 250)

Thus the chronotope enables us to identify all the differing spatio-temporal configurations at work within various narrative units (sub-plots, scenes, episodes, etc.) and to analyse their inter-relations within the larger connected structures of narrative. This is an invaluable perspective when the primary focus of our analysis is precisely the ways in which audio-visual narratives can incorporate the disruptive effects of trauma and madness within their structures.

5.3. The 'multiple realities' trope of madness in post-Yugoslav cinemas

Since the various events of Yugoslav break-up and their consequences in the 1990s have formed, in one way or another, a consistent thematic focus for all post-Yugoslav cinemas in the years that followed – this substantial quantity of moving images could also be understood as a cultural discourse on the traumas of the period. Indeed, many titles specifically approach the themes of Yugoslav break-up from this perspective of their traumatic legacy upon individuals. This is especially the case with regard to fictionalised feature film with its conventions of focusing narratives upon the experiences of individuals and its potential to invoke powerful audience identifications with those portrayed on screen,

further lending the medium to an exploration of historical themes at the most personalised and individual level.⁷⁸

One of the more frequent techniques used by filmmakers to engage with the traumatic legacies of Yugoslav break-up has involved the use of non-linear narratives in which temporal unity is disrupted by frequent flashbacks. In other words, using the narratological terminology developed by Propp (1968) and Shklovsky (1973), the various events that comprise the fabula (story or plot) of the film are not presented in the 'syuzhet' (narrative – i.e. how the viewer/audience learns of these events) according to their chronological story sequence. Such devices have become standardised as common techniques for indicating characters' complicated relationships to history in the wake of trauma. The key variables with regard to this device, in terms of how trauma is conceptualised, relates to whether or not the flashbacks are presented as voluntary reminiscences or as compulsive repetitions of previous lived experience. However, in almost all cases the experience of the flashback is shown as a short episode in which there is deviation from the spatio-temporal configuration of the diegesis and the momentary jump to an alternate configuration – which is normally evidently coded as one which happened sometime in the past (enabling the audience to process the narrative appropriately by reconstructing a single unified chronological sequence from the jumble of the cinematic narrative). The alternative chronotope is in effect only for a scene or two, before we return to the one established by the majority of the preceding and following narrative. Therefore here trauma is translated into the audio-visual narrative medium as a special type of subjective experience, presented according to established conventions for encoding other similar experiences such as dreams or individual character's memories within the diegesis unknown to others.

Thus, in films such as the Macedonian production, *Kontakt* (Stanojkovski, 2005), in which a former mental hospital patient and imprisoned criminal meet and fall in love after their respective releases, this technique is used to briefly fill in some of their back-story – in particular in explaining why Zana was so traumatised by her experiences of the 1990s conflicts (we see, through a couple of flashbacks, that she unwittingly learned of her father's involvement in the selling of arms during this time). Another variation on this

⁷⁸ This is precisely one of the defining characteristics of what Rosenstone has termed the 'mainstream historical drama' – whereby often abstract historical master narratives are 'personalised, emotionalised, and empathised'. See Rosenstone (2012) for more.

device relates to the flashback which is introduced *during* the traumatic confrontation with death during the conflicts (in films whose narratives include these traumatic episodes – rather than starting after their occurrence) – whereby the flashback is to previous events and experiences in the characters’ lives (often war combatants) which lends greater emotional impact to their ‘current’ experience of suffering (see for example Dragojević’s 1996 *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame* for an example of this). In an inversion of these narrative structures there are also examples such as *The Fourth Man* (Zečević, 2007) in which the narrative focuses on a war veteran’s inability to recall the content of his war-time experiences (which do not even return as flashbacks) forcing him to recover the details of his wartime experiences through secretive detective work that brings him into conflict with other former soldiers and commanders in the post-war context. Ultimately, having discovered a videotaped recording of some of his most horrific wartime deeds (the execution of POWs/civilians of a differing ethnicity) the remainder of his repressed traumatic experiences returns to him in the extended flashback sequence which he has sought throughout the narrative – and which now prompts his suicide. These examples are just a small selection of many similar films from various post-Yugoslav cinemas⁷⁹ in which the approach to knowledge and truth about war-time experience is shown to be both elusive and subjective – an effect rendered most frequently through the use of temporally dislocated narratives, flashbacks (occasional ‘flash forwards’ or prolepsis) and a viewing experience in which previously seen information and events must constantly be re-evaluated in light of new knowledge and perspectives, often delivered in the form of trauma-induced flashbacks. These narratives do however all adopt a perspective on trauma that it will eventually become an accessible and at least partially knowable object of knowledge for the sufferer (and for the audience – who gain access to this inner world through the use of the flashback which, incorrectly, implies that PTSD flashbacks are entirely visual in nature – something strongly contradicted by the testimony of actual former combatants or civilian participants in conflict).

A less often used technique for rendering trauma is evident in Žbanić’s debut feature *Grbavica* (2006), focusing on the post-war life of a Sarajevo woman, Esma, living with the legacy of her wartime rape at the hands of Serbian paramilitaries, which includes a daughter conceived in such circumstances from whom the truth about her father has been

⁷⁹ See also *No One’s Son* (Ostojić, 2008), *Donkey* (Nuic, 2009), or *The Blacks* (Dević and Jurić, 2009) for more examples.

thus far hidden. Here the narrative organisation is linear (adhering more to realist principles) in which time moves only forward (starting many years after the rape) and no access is granted for the audience to Esma's wartime experiences and traumas. Here the representability of trauma is an ethical issue, structured (in director Žbanić's interviews about the film)⁸⁰ around the notion of respect for the victim's ownership of her tragic experiences and the maintenance of a respectful distance between viewer/observer and victim. Instead, the ongoing stress of traumatic experience is presented not using narrative structures but rather using subtle aspects of camera positioning, mise-en-scene and the actors' performances (so for example, on a crowded city bus Esma is squashed against a male passenger's exposed torso – her discomfort indicated by the unusual point-of-view close-up shot of the torso along with Esma's disconcerted facial expression in a subsequent shot).⁸¹ Ultimately, in films such as this one, the traumatic experience is far less accessible to audiences than in some of the films mentioned previously. Its symptoms likewise include mental disturbances of various sorts (stress, anxiety, etc.) but there is no narrative attempt to grant access to the traumatic moment – the narrative moves only chronologically forward and traumatic legacies are present as outward manifestations of discomfort or stress on Esma's face or in her speech but, never, in the form of a flashback device which would render us witness to the original horrors.

Arguably there is a third reasonably common cinematic technique for exploring trauma within the fiction feature film which falls somewhere in between the two mentioned above in terms of both its formal techniques and the resulting consequences for how trauma is conceptualised therein. While both of the types of trauma narrative mentioned above offer a single 'objective' fabula or story, with the difference being that one features a complex narrative arrangement in which access to the traumatic past is ultimately granted for the audience – and the other resists this in favour of a narrative realism in which the past persists only in the outward facial gestures of a panic-stricken survivor reminded of it on a city bus for example, both narrative types ultimately offer a single master chronotope (although with the complex narrative, audiences must decode the sequence of events in order to reconstruct their chronological temporality). These two narrative types are also the

⁸⁰ Žbanić's interview, available online http://www.coop99.at/grbavica_website/regie_int_en_03.htm, from promotional materials for *Grbavica*.

⁸¹ See Mandušić (2012) for a detailed close reading of Žbanić's cinematic techniques for rendering the ongoing effects of Esma's traumatic experiences – without recourse to the commonly used flashback technique.

ones which have been the subject of the few occasional publications on trauma representations in any of the post-Yugoslav visual cultures (*Grbavica* especially, as a result of Žbanić's Berlin Golden Bear Award win, has received fairly extensive attention).

The third narrative structure for rendering trauma within the audio-visual medium (that has thus far received no attention in literature on the topic),⁸² which one can observe in multiple post-Yugoslav cinemas, is what I will refer to as the 'multiple-realities trope of madness' – in which, rather than decoding past/present/future as in the chronologically jumbled trauma narratives, audiences must decode the demarcation between an objective stable and external reality and a hallucination and illusion that arises from a traumatised characters' subjective experience of the world in the wake of this trauma. This type of narrative structure is also a deviation from the realism of *Grbavica* for instance – but equally also differs from the flashback narratives of *The Fourth Man* or *The Blacks* in that the 'multiple realities' narrative offers numerous simultaneous chronotopes, some of which are hallucinatory figments of the traumatised characters involved – which must be decoded into a hierarchy of objective to subjective so that the overall narrative can be processed back into a coherent story or fabula. One possible analogy for these three narrative types could be the three main sentence types available in the English language (simple, compound and complex) whereby Žbanić's narrative corresponds to the mental processing required of a simple sentence, *The Fourth Man* resembling the compound (multiple clauses but on an equal horizontal level), and the multiple realities trope being the equivalent of a complex sentence (featuring main and sub-clauses integrated in a vertical hierarchy).

All three narrative types are equally concerned with translating trauma into the audio-visual medium in a way that induces empathy with victims and sufferers – their differences lie in their variable conceptualisations of what trauma symptoms involve (and how they should be best rendered in cinema) and, secondly, in how they negotiate the ethical challenges of representing trauma. The remainder of this chapter will now focus on this 'multiple realities' trope of madness in which traumatic experiences are shown to induce an ongoing perceptual confusion borne from the hallucinatory symptoms that arise when the imaginary works to repair the absences and losses so abruptly experienced by the traumatised characters in question. It is in these films that the destabilising effect of

⁸² Such tropes have been to an extent discussed in the context of Serbian literature however by Norris (2013) who has studied the use of ghosts and the uncanny in novels about the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and Montenegro.

madness on knowledge is most thoroughly employed and also in these narratives that traumatised individuals in post-conflict societies are most frequently shown as raving and alienated individuals outcast, by nature of their hallucinations and delusions, from the society around them. Instead, the insight into their mental state is granted to the privileged spectator who is given access to both the internal world of such characters and also the more 'objective' and stable diegetic reality. In the three films for discussion in this chapter, this demarcation is fairly clearly managed (especially in the two films which employ extensive comedy – the third, a much more tragic story, is tellingly less clear in demarcating this distinction for the audience). The subsequent chapter will then focus on a close reading of a fourth, more experimental film, *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* wherein there is a comprehensive reconfiguration of the more mainstream conventions evident here.

The three films which will here illustrate the discussion of the multiple realities trope of trauma in post-Yugoslav cinemas are the Serbian-UK co-production *Loving Glances*, the Bosnian-German co-production of *Fuse* and the Macedonian *Mirage*. All three films feature either minor or major characters who are traumatised by some particular experiences which are shown to be resulting from histories of Yugoslav break-up (conflict in particular) and subsequent post-Yugoslav transition. *Loving Glances* is a light romantic comedy from the veteran 'Prague School' Serbian director Karanović, in which a Serbian refugee, Labud, displaced by fighting in Bosnia and Croatia, arrives in Belgrade during wartime and seeks to establish contact through the US embassy with his fiancé who had immigrated as a refugee to Chicago. All alone in an unknown city, Labud is accompanied everywhere by hallucinations of loved ones from which he has been separated by the wars (his fiancé, his mother who has been killed in the fighting, and his university professor) with whom he debates the options before him and how to improve his situation. *Fuse* is another comedic film, although here the narrative also incorporates tragedy and suffering in a mode which was so common for post-Yugoslav films on the conflicts (in particular those from Bosnia)⁸³ – here focusing on the rural village community of Tešanj (an actually-existing place which saw some of the most intense fighting and ethnic cleansing of the

⁸³ See for example the Academy Award winning *No Man's Land* (Tanović, 2001) for another high-profile example of this tragic-comic tone in post-Yugoslav war cinema. Tanović in fact identifies this as a particularly evident strand of Bosnian post-conflict film-making, although it is arguably equally evident also in films such as the aforementioned Serbian production *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (Dragojevic, 1996).

wars) as they struggle to portray an appropriate image of reconciliation and ‘moving on’ for the impending high-profile visit of US president Bill Clinton (the film is set in 1997). One family in particular is struggling however with this imperative to move on, traumatised by the disappearance of soldier Adnan during the war – about whose whereabouts they have heard nothing since. Zaim, Adnan’s father, is throughout the film hallucinating Adnan’s ghostly presence and deliberating how he might ‘rescue’ him. Finally, *Mirage* is the debut feature of Svetozar Ristovski, focusing on the difficulties of post-Yugoslav transition in Veles, a town in rural Macedonia stricken by worklessness, corrupt authorities and a lack of support or opportunity for the youth. Within this milieu, a young boy, Marko, gifted with language and writing but intensely bullied both at school and at home begins to hallucinate an imaginary friend; a soldier who embodies his slowly escalating vigilante fantasy of justice for the suffering caused to him by the world around him. The short sections which follow will outline in more detail how this multiple realities trope functions as a means for translating trauma into the audio-visual medium, the reliance on madness therein, and also briefly consider the films’ ethno-national self-other representations (a focus of one of the main thesis objectives), before the conclusion brings together the discussion to summarise how trauma and madness have featured in post-Yugoslav cinemas.

5.4. The trauma of loss and displacement: *Loving Glances* (Karanović, 2003) and *Fuse* (Žalica, 2003)

Coming a few years after the end of the conflicts – and, equally importantly, after numerous films focused on the fighting itself had already been made – *Loving Glances* and *Fuse* take as their topic the traumatic nature of the civilian experience of the Yugoslav conflicts. Both narratives focus upon characters struggling to come to terms with loss of family members and/or displacement resulting from the fighting. The mental stress of these absences causes hallucinations of missing loved ones (ghosts of sorts – although without any element of the supernatural being present in the portrayal) which isolates the sufferers of loss as raving social outcasts continuing extended conversations with people visible only to themselves.

Loving Glances is a light-hearted example (dedicated to the memory of French filmmaker Rene Clair) of this in which the trauma of displacement that constitutes the refugee experience is essentially one of loss of loved ones either left behind, killed, or who’ve ended up in alternative destinations for their refuge. Made by established Serbian

director Srdjan Karanović, formerly very active within Yugoslavia throughout the 1970s and 1980s before his emigration to the US during the 1990s, *Loving Glances* marked the FAMU-educated veteran's return to fictional feature film after spending almost a decade focused exclusively on directing documentaries. This 2003 Serbian film focuses on the destitution and loneliness (although the latter is the far more traumatic aspect) of the refugees Labud and Romana who meet in Belgrade through a local dating agency as they seek to form new connections after losing contact with their previous familial and social ties. The main plot line involves both refugees seeking to overcome their isolation in a space peripheral to their previous lives. Labud (unsuccessfully for the most part) seeks a migratory visa for the USA so that he can seek out his pre-war fiancé who is reportedly in Chicago. Even his name (meaning 'Swan' and invoking images of freedom and flight), so comically amusing to others throughout the film, is a cruel reminder of his physical entrapment and stasis – a lack of control over his spatio-temporal experience. Likewise, Romana frequently talks of her wish to move to Sydney to join her sister who is already there but, as in Labud's case, this other space within the narrative is opened up merely to indicate the possibility of movement – and its frustrated opposite which afflicts Labud and Romana.

Meanwhile, as Labud and Romana negotiate the challenges of loneliness and homelessness in Belgrade, the audience is throughout also shown precisely the close family members and loved ones from whom the protagonists are now forcefully separated. In keeping with the light comic tone, their presence is from the outset indicated as a hallucinatory consequence of their refugee status and there is no confusion between which 'reality' is the objective external one evident to other characters – and which corresponds to the internal subjective experience of the traumatised refugees. The camera alternately cuts to close up shots in which Labud interacts with his visible 'ghosts', discussing his life with them and long shots (suggestive of a stranger's perspective) in which Labud can be seen alone gesticulating to nobody on a street corner. Moreover, the film establishes such a representational pattern for all of the refugees shown in the film (including the more minor characters that we assume at first are deranged for some reason or other – before we realise that their affliction is comparable to that of Labud and Romana).

Hallucinations – a common symptom of PTSD – are thus here not only those relating to a traumatic confrontation with death or a similar experience but are instead the

result of a loss of social and familial ties effected by war (here due to the refugee status of protagonists). In *Loving Glances* they are a tragic-comic device (sometimes bringing back family members even from the dead) which conceptualises trauma as the inhibition of multiple spatio-temporal co-ordinates at the same time, some of which are imaginary and fleeting fantasies into a pre-war chronotope whose unity has now been irrevocably shattered. The processing of these narratives requires an audience to decode certain ‘mini’ episodes wherein characters interact with hallucinated loved ones as a separate subjective and expressive spatio-temporal configuration which does not belong on the same narrative level as the broader narrative. In fact, the presence of these comical ghosts soon becomes an indicator that we have entered a separate chronotope to the one employed for the main narrative thread. Here, Labud’s fantasies stop the flow of time in the main narrative thread and instead facilitate the impossible interaction with the array of notable persons to whose absence he has not yet reconciled himself to.

A similar technique for translating a character’s trauma of familial loss can be seen in *Fuse*, the debut fictional feature of Bosnian former documentarian Pjer Žalica, in which a small rural community must project the image of successful post-war transition and reconciliation for the impending visit of US president Bill Clinton. However, this proves especially difficult for one resident, Zaim, a former police chief who is unable to function in his professional capacity due to being completely overcome with hallucinations of his missing son, Adnan, a war combatant who never returned home and about whom Zaim and his two other surviving children have had no news. The film’s opening scene establishes the multiple realities chronotope from the outset – again clearly demarcating narrative layers for the audience – by showing Zaim sitting alone in his garden pouring drinks into two glasses and talking to himself as the camera pans horizontally behind a tree. When it re-emerges from the other side of the tree we see that Adnan, to whom Zaim is speaking, is receiving the second glass. However, the confusion over this diegetic instability is immediately dispelled as the conversation between the two is the improbable following:

Zaim (to Adnan): ‘Are you really dead?’
Adnan: ‘I am’
Zaim: ‘They tell me to forget you’
Adnan: ‘So forget’
Zaim: ‘No way...’

The camera then cuts to a shot of Zaim's surviving son, Faruk, catching a glimpse from inside the house of his father sitting in the garden before a point-of-view shot from Faruk's perspective indeed shows us Zaim sitting alone at the bench pouring drinks into two glasses and talking without an interlocutor. Once again therefore the technique for establishing the clear demarcation between an objective and stable main narrative reality and the subjective one of the traumatised hallucinating characters is simple: an initial diegetic inconsistency (in that suddenly and from nowhere characters who are either dead in the story or who cannot possibly inhabit such a space are seen in the frame) is explained by recourse to long shots and point-of-view shots of third party characters – stressing the hallucinatory nature of the family members appearing before the traumatised protagonists and establishing that the film's diegetic consistency will occasionally be interrupted by the presence of these ghosts. By the end of the film's narrative, during which the town officials have made various hasty preparations for the impending visit of Bill Clinton, Zaim – unable to reconcile himself to the loss of his son – commits suicide by setting off a gas explosion in his house while he is inside. The incident occurs just as Clinton's motorcade is pulling into the town square, alarming the attending security agents who then decide to whisk their president away before he has even set foot outside his vehicle. Tešanj's hope for a connection and recognition from the world thus dissipates due to the lingering unresolved nature of residents' traumatic experiences and memories. Thereafter, in the closing scenes, we see Faruk sitting under the apple tree from the film's opening shot in a *mise-en-scene* which directly mimics that used for Zaim's talking to Adnan's ghost in the first scene. Here, in the last scene, it is Faruk who occupies Zaim's position as the speaker – and the now dead father Zaim, along with Adnan, who sit opposite as the hallucinated ghostly signifiers of Faruk's inability to process the traumatic fact that their signifieds (i.e. his actual brother and father) are no longer around. Again, the hallucination becomes a form of semantic madness – a visualisation of a signifier (the image of his family members) – for which the corresponding signifieds have been suddenly and tragically destroyed.

In this sense, as in some of the films discussed earlier in the thesis (*Marshall Tito's Spirit* for instance) madness in these instances of post-Yugoslav cinematic culture is really the product of a rapid and shocking destruction and re-organisation of both the external world and structures of a society – but also of its symbolic systems for ordering and making sense of experience. In *Fuse* and in *Loving Glances* this trope is specifically focused on the

traumas of loss and displacement (in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* the focus was rather on the discrepancy between lingering remnants of Yugoslav socialist ideology which remained active in characters' minds – and its absence or sudden re-configuration in various official discourses coming from political authorities). The multiple realities trope of madness in these instances functions as a means for translating the traumatic nature of this gap or discrepancy between the symbolic and real as the subject struggles to reconcile the two (usually to the evident bafflement of other minor characters). The perceptual instability – for example in that characters such as Labud or Zaim 'see' those who are not there, and are not in control of these apparitions – is simply the evidence of an imaginary which seeks to patch up this traumatic loss/discrepancy. The other option – modifying the symbolic in order to account or reflect the new reality – is shown to be a far more difficult, if not impossible, prospect (not least in narrative climaxes such as Zaim's suicide)⁸⁴ suggesting that in these examples of post-Yugoslav cinematic culture, whether coming from Bosnia or Serbia, the concept of traumatic experience is precisely as that loss which cannot ever be overcome. The only difference perhaps across the two titles is that, whereas in *Loving Glances* the traumatised refugees discover some solace from their hallucinations in rebuilding new social connections, the Bosnian *Fuse* offers a far bleaker assessment of the legacy of such traumas for prospects of those continuing lives in their wake (although it too is not entirely without hope in the final scene of firemen of differing ethnic backgrounds coming together to support Faruk in the wake of his father's suicide). Trauma therefore becomes a challenge as much for the community as the individual and it is only when the latter is prepared to acknowledge and assist the former, that any sort of even semi-positive narrative resolution is offered.

A further worthy point of comparison between the two films lies not only in how they represent trauma using tropes of madness – but also in their comment on the responsibilities and causes of how these traumas came to be inflicted upon the characters in question; in other words, pertaining to their comment upon the causes of conflict which resulted in the loss of family members and the physical displacements of refugees fleeing fighting. It is noteworthy that here there is also a significant degree of overlap with both films' narratives ultimately implying that the constructions of entirely separate national

⁸⁴ It should also be noted that this suicide motif in *Fuse* is not an isolated case but rather occurs in various other films about either civilian or military survivors of the conflicts – see also *The Fourth Man* (Zečević, 2007) or *Absolute Hundred* (Golubović, 2001).

identities, a crucial step in establishing the self-other discursive dichotomies which were essential to justify and mobilise for war, were predicated upon myths, fallacies and lies which were only possible in the wake of historical ignorance and groupthink mob mentalities.

Both *Fuse* and *Loving Glances* in one way or another establish clear demarcations between various characters' ethno-national status – as if organising the narrative around the binary self-other categories prevalent in wartime national identity discourses – before ultimately showing this to be an impossibly simplifying reduction of the complex histories and identities of the people who lived both before, during and after the years of the second Yugoslavia. In *Loving Glances* this amounts to the characters' initial ethno-national status being complicated by further revelations throughout the film which increasingly render the myth of ethnic purity untenable (culminating in the shock of Labud's mother/ghost learning that her own son's father was not the Serb she previously thought, but a Greek-Albanian she had had a brief fling with on a holiday). Likewise, in *Fuse*, Adnan's disappearance is naturally assumed to be the result of his status as a soldier fighting on the Bosniak side against Serbs in Tešanj – until a narrative climax reveals that Adnan was murdered by a fellow Bosniak with whom he'd had an ongoing dispute over their joint smuggling operation during the war (and in which both Serbs and Bosniaks had happily collaborated in order to profit financially, despite fighting raging at the same time).

This undermining of the binary identity narratives of the conflicts in Bosnia is furthered by Žalica's interesting practice of cross-ethnic casting, whereby most of his star performers are cast in roles that differ from their Bosnian/Serbian/etc. ethnicity. So for example, perhaps the most prominent Bosniak actor working today, Emir Hadžihafizbegović, is cast as a Serb fire-fighter, Stanko, in *Fuse* while long established Serbian actor (active since the 1980s), Bogdan Diklić, plays the Bosniak, Zaim.⁸⁵ This fluidity with regard to casting in Žalica's film is a further textual element (although drawing obviously upon audiences' para-textual awareness of the nationalities of these star

⁸⁵ Director Pjer Žalica's own wife, Jasna Žalica, also plays a Serb character – Hitka. Further plot devices serving this purpose include the decision by Tešanj authorities to use a Roma gypsy band for Clinton's parade instead of the actual Bosniak firemen's brass band on account of the fact that the former are superior musicians. However, they are to be dressed in the firemen's uniforms and passed off as the original brass band on the presumption that Clinton and his advisors would be unlikely to tell the difference anyway. Again there is a satirical probing of the gap between difference as a discursive construct – and difference (or lack thereof) as perceived and lived experience in social encounters, with the latter often being far less concrete or even noticeable than the former.

performers) which serves to undermine the concrete oppositions of the war-time discourses around self-other identity constructions. Such cinematic devices suggest that there is far lesser distance between these peoples' histories and cultures than many were led to believe during the conflicts of the 1990s. Both films also offer a glimpse into the Yugoslav past as further proof of this aspect by including mixed marriages and cross-ethnic romantic relationships as having been an accepted norm, the loss of which has impoverished everybody's prospects for happiness and the aversion of loneliness and alienation. In *Fuse* there is evidence that Hitka and Adnan's marriage was a happy one until the war separated them while in *Loving Glances* Labud and Romana evidently make each other happy despite their confused (but not corresponding) ethnic backgrounds. Moreover, through the interactions of their 'ghosts' we learn that various other characters had fond memories of various relationships that make their subsequent insistences on ethnic purity and exclusion both hypocritical and baffling. By way of further emphasis, the film's main theme is heard frequently throughout the narrative – each time sung in a different language – as if by way of a reminder of an international humanism whereby the most fundamental human needs and desires are trans-cultural and superseding of local identities.

It should however be noted that in neither film is the consequence of ethno-national conflict ignored and pointing out the mythologies and simplifications upon which it was predicated is not the same as pretending that it is now easy to forget the whole thing. In *Fuse* in particular there is a concerted satire of the imposed reconciliatory dialogue, often originating from well-meaning international organisations, which amounts to verbal 'now you see it now you don't' attempts to make grievances and the symbolic boundaries entrenched by conflict experiences disappear. One of many examples of this sharp satire in Žalica's film can be seen in the Tešanj firemen's meeting in which the Bosniak fire-fighters are told that they are soon due to begin shift-sharing with personnel from their counterpart Serbian division from just across the 'border' in Republika Srpska. The head of the fire-fighters address his co-workers while standing before a map of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the central division which separates Republika Srpska chalked on it, telling his colleagues: 'This line which you see here, along which so much blood was spilled... well... now you don't see it anymore'. Of course the real divisions symbolised by the line on the map are unlikely to be so effortlessly dispelled – a fact of which the film's gently mocking satire reminds viewers throughout – but there is no doubt, come the end of the film, that the

lives of Tešanj's inhabitants would be improved if an effective solution to these divisions could be found, by local inhabitants themselves on their own terms rather than those of the intervening UN forces (represented as benevolent and well-meaning but somewhat ill-equipped to grasp, on a personal level, the sheer extent of suffering experienced by Tešanj's inhabitants). In conclusion, *Fuse* represents at once an attempt to highlight the obvious shortcomings of politically-motivated reconciliatory efforts (arising both from international and domestic elites) – while nonetheless acknowledging the absolute necessity of addressing traumatic legacies of conflict in Bosnia. It is the gulf between this obvious and essential challenge for the inhabitants of Tešanj and the absence of a quick fix to it that a certain tragic absurdity arises. *Fuse* is a text which ultimately reminds audiences that the transition will be both long and occasionally painful – a point made most forcefully by Zaim's experience and the use of the multiple realities trope of madness – ultimately tempering hopes for a quick fix to Bosnia's post-Yugoslav situation while simultaneously offering hope that eventually, in years to come, the legacies of war will cease to be ever-present in the daily life of those living on in Tešanj, and Bosnia as a whole.

5.5. Traumas of post-Yugoslav transition: *Mirage* (Ristovski, 2004)

Contrasting examples of this multiple realities trope of madness can be seen across a number of other post-Yugoslav titles – constructed cinematically in the same way as in the films discussed previously – albeit towards slightly differing thematic concerns. Another debut feature of a director experienced initially in documentary, Svetozar Ristovski's Macedonian production of *Mirage* (Ristovski, 2004), is a case in point wherein the multiple realities trope is used to engage with the immediate experiences of post-Yugoslav transitions focusing on their traumatic consequences for a young boy, Marko, growing up in the town of Veles in Eastern Macedonia.⁸⁶ As the town suffers the grip of severe economic crisis following the privatisation of the main industrial employers (now purchased by a newly minted oligarch class) – sinking Marko's alcoholic violent father further into frustration – the situation elsewhere in the town is not much better. Uncomfortably close bonds between various leaders of the church, police services, and new wealthy oligarch elites (shown sharing a drink together at the local bar) suggest a transition

⁸⁶ This multiple realities trope is also evident, in relation to child protagonists living in the wake of significant historical developments in their societies, in *Tito and Me* (Marković, 1992), a comedy in which a young boy – to the embarrassment of his family – becomes obsessed with Josip Broz (Tito) and undertakes a pilgrimage in his honour.

in which a well-positioned minority exploit connections for advance in personal power and wealth, while the majority live in squalor and unemployment.

These adult figures form the backdrop against the core of the film's narrative which focuses on Marko's experience of being victimised in school by the children of these adult characters – who've now internalised perfectly the new prevailing social logic of exploiting strength in order to subjugate and torment the weak and vulnerable. It becomes quickly evident that Marko, a sensitive and creative boy gifted with language, functions as a 'punch bag' for the frustrations induced by the transition process – suffering unjust beatings and bullying both at home and at school. His only solace comes from the school Macedonian literature teacher (who is actually a Muslim of Bosniak origin – and thus likewise suffers abuse from the school bullies) who informs Marko of an upcoming poetry competition themed around Macedonia's upcoming independence day celebration, which will see the winner sent on a trip to Paris. As Marko engages in the writing of his poem (and the beatings intensify), he starts to hallucinate the presence of a benevolent but tough soldier named Paris who keeps him company and teaches him how to handle weapons. Ultimately however, Marko's continued suffering at the hands of the bullies and the failure of his literature teacher to protect him by standing up to them results in the narrative climaxing on the school's independence day celebration, during which Marko murders the (Bosniak) Macedonian literature teacher instead of performing his independence-themed poem.

Mirage is therefore a fairly bleak picture of life⁸⁷ in a mid-sized Macedonian town experiencing a post-Yugoslav transition that is characterised, for the most part, as one of hardships that foster resentment and frustration – the greatest victims of which are the youngest and most vulnerable members of that society. The multiple realities trope of madness is here again linked to traumatic experience – although here it is the loss of safety and security affecting a child protagonist that triggers it (rather than a specific experience of conflict as in the previous films discussed). The manner in which the trope is established is largely consistent with that seen in the previous films through the sudden appearance within the frame of a character that only the protagonist takes notice of and seems to know about. Close-up and mid-shots are used when the character is evident also to the audience – inter-cut with longer shots in which the protagonist can be seen alone (suggesting that, from a

⁸⁷ It should be noted that, for all the praise received by the film as Ristovski's debut feature, *Mirage* is perhaps somewhat over-reliant on frequent images of children being beaten by other children as a device for eliciting shock and emotional impact, risking in certain moments entering pantomime territory in the characterization of villainous characters.

bystander's perspective, the ghost is not apparent). Unlike in *Fuse* and *Loving Glances* however the level of demarcation between the multiple realities is not quite as clear (*Mirage* is not comic at all in its tone and thus incorporates at the textual level this uneasy diegetic uncertainty more readily).

Nonetheless, the text clearly invites the reading of Paris's character as a figment of Marko's imagination – which starts appearing just as his traumatic bullying reaches a climax and his literature assignment requires him to stimulate his creative ideas. In any case, the naming of the soldier – which parallels the wished-for destination of Marko's escape from Veles (Paris) suggests most strongly that Paris the soldier, in the most obvious reading, is a metaphor for Marko's twin fantasies of both escape and strength/retribution. Again, as in *Fuse* and *Loving Glances*, a diegetic instability is introduced in the narrative as an audio-visual device for conceptualising the inner subjective experience of traumatic experiences and particularly the work of the imaginary in 'patching up' those most traumatic absences which affect characters in these films – always a result of the multi-faceted phenomena of post-Yugoslav break-up and transition. In terms of the prospects for moving beyond this trauma, *Mirage* is possibly closer to *Fuse* than to *Loving Glances* in terms of the narrative closure being on violence and the murder of an innocent (ethnic) other who becomes a further victim of the harsh conditions of life portrayed within the film.

One final point of comparison between *Mirage* and the previous two films worth making is in the shared thematic concern with self-other identity constructions established in nationalist discourses so prominent as a feature of post-Yugoslav transition. The textual comment on this issue is fairly straightforward with the only characters showing an interest or concern for another's ethnicity or national background being the most ignorant and despicable (i.e. the villains of the transition society) – whether the police chief who questions the Macedonian literature teacher's competence in his job (a doubt based purely on the teacher's perceived lack of ethnic purity by virtue of his mixed Bosniak roots) or the school bullies who repeatedly abuse their teacher with chants of 'Bosnian c**t'. Moreover, the symbolism of the film's opening with a patriotic national song (sung by the drunken father returning from the local bar) and its closing with the school's independence day celebration frames the local narrative (Marko's suffering and ultimate murder of his teacher) within the context of Macedonia's nation-building practices and ideologies in the post-Yugoslav transition. That those who don't quite fit in to the oppressive majority views

and identities (ethnic or otherwise) are the ones who ultimately suffer in such a social environment is the narrative's unambiguous and strongly-emphasised conclusion; hardly a positive appraisal of the economic, cultural and social situation of the first years of Macedonia's⁸⁸ post-Yugoslav experience.

5.6. Conclusions

Following Freud's conceptualisation of trauma as being not only the result of some physical danger but also a radical 'internal assault on the ego' (Caruth, 1996: 8) we can say that the contours and consequences of this 'assault' have formed a key thematic concern for filmmakers from post-Yugoslav successor states, who have found numerous strategies for translating these concerns into the audio-visual narrative medium of popular feature film. Three main strategies can be summarised for how trauma is rendered within these films:

- A complex narrative arrangement which includes frequent 'flashbacks' and 'flash forwards' that emphasise the temporal disorientations wrought by trauma.
- A more minimal and realist approach in which the original traumatic memory remains inaccessible to the audience, only hinted at in the actors' performances and subtle use of camera work which suggests the workings of the traumatised subjects internal life – but always remains on the outside of it.
- A multiple realities trope which rather than scrambling the temporal continuity of the first strategy, opts instead for a diegetic disunity and instability.

Ultimately, all three strategies converge upon the same underlying function – to dramatise and enact the challenges for the knowledge making process that result from trauma by, in various ways, providing audiences with various forms of decoding work to do as part of the viewing process. The films vary however in the amount of assistance they provide in this – which ultimately decides the degree to which this decoding can extend in processing the original traumatic experience and its consequences. The multiple realities trope, discussed in most depth here (and the most neglected in current literature – although it should be said that none have been systematically studied beyond discussions of a few high-profile titles), is a cinematic device which dramatises a perceptual instability arising from characters'

⁸⁸ Rather than become involved in a messy dispute over the state's nomenclature (still officially between Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYROM – and now just Republic of Macedonia – RoM) I have referred to it simply as Macedonia for two reasons: this is the name used in the country itself and, secondly, it seems likely that after recent resolutions of some issues with Greece relating to the name dispute – the path is open for this name to become the official one in the near future.

experiencing the after-effects of traumas resulting from Yugoslav break-up and conflict. This perceptual instability takes the form of a semantic confusion whereby the symbolic realities which are materialised in language and images indicate a crucial and traumatic gulf with the lived reality, into which situation the imaginary intervenes with hallucinated images which serve as indicators of this unprocessed loss of security, safety or meaning. Although the texts discussed in this chapter might have differing backgrounds in terms of state funding and countries of production, the overwhelming conclusion is that at both aesthetic and ideological levels there is a great degree of consistency in how trauma is translated into the audiovisual medium, which types of experiences it relates to and the ideological implications of these representations.

While the aesthetic and narrative aspects of this consistency here may be less surprising across the different successor cinemas – the ideological similarities, in that overcoming trauma depends upon the re-establishment of a viable, tolerant and ethnically mixed social collective may be less expected if the not so distant histories of conflict are borne in mind. However, in all cases it should be noted that we are here dealing with films written and directed largely by those who opposed ethnic division and fighting from the beginning – and continue to highlight its destructive legacies even in these films coming a few years after the cessation of fighting. Ultimately these films indicate visual culture as a vital space in which different ways of thinking about trauma can be examined and developed – in all cases with a view to highlighting the essential challenge that traumatic loss and shock represents in the post-Yugoslav context as a precursor to any sort of viable future. While not advocating a return to Yugoslavia as a political entity, the films nonetheless evidence an overwhelmingly positive assessment of values of tolerance, multiculturalism and state-support for minimising marginalisation and exclusion. It is in this sense that some ideological remnants of Yugoslavism are being advocated precisely as the antidote to the damage ensuing recent abuses of such ideologies. It is thus here that we see the flipside to the earlier ‘ideological demobilisation’ emerging: post-Yugoslav tropes of madness function not only to dissipate the powerful grip of dominant and destructive ideologies but also to positively advocate for the establishment of a value system which facilitates a harmonious, supportive and inclusive social body as the only ultimate way of patching up the lingering wounds of traumatic loss.

Chapter 6: Madness and the avant-garde approach to trauma: The 1999 NATO bombardment in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 2000)

6.1. Introduction

In 1999 NATO forces carried out a 78-day bombing of the former Yugoslav republics of Serbia and Montenegro (which were at that point still in a federal union), in an attempt to assert control over the escalating conflict in the province of Kosovo.⁸⁹ Most of the bombs fell on the three larger Serbian cities of Belgrade, Novi Sad, and Niš in what was, for much of the civilian population, the most direct experience of conflict during this decade, since the earlier wars of 1991-95 had unfolded mostly in the former republics of Bosnia, Croatia, and to a much smaller extent, Slovenia. With somewhere between 489-1,200 civilians killed⁹⁰ and immense destruction wrought upon infrastructure (bridges, factories, railways, refineries, and broadcasting facilities were chief targets), the brief conflict therefore represented a significant trauma for the population both on an individual level, but also on a collective and imaginative level since it evoked memories, narratives, and images of WWII bombings (especially of Belgrade) in 1941 and 1944 by German and Allied forces respectively, both of which also took place over the April Easter period.⁹¹

As was true with many of the earlier episodes of violence during the Yugoslav break-up, the bombing of 1999 also proved to be a key thematic concern of cinematic production during this period. Films such as *Sky Hook* (Samardžić, 1999), *Wounded Country* (Lazić, 1999), *Dorčol Manhattan* (Bjelica, 2000) provide examples of what some critics have labelled as 'patriotic propaganda' for the Milošević regime (Daković, 2004: 81),

⁸⁹ Violence had become increasingly frequent since early 1998, with the Serb-controlled JNA (Yugoslav National Army) launching an offensive against the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) who had recently extended the areas under their control. Factors such as density of civilian population and evidence of its historic existence in the region (in the form of medieval ruins and religious sites for example) provided a key aspect of the claim to territory for both sides and hence much of the violence was therefore coming to be directed at these sources of the opponent's legitimation.

⁹⁰ Estimates of civilian deaths are perhaps inevitably subject to some variation, with Human Rights Watch verifying somewhere 489-528 and the Yugoslav committee to UNICEF reporting around 1,200. In addition to this, there continues to be uncertainty about the culpability for certain cancer-related deaths amongst both soldiers and civilians (as in the Iraq wars), arising from the use of depleted uranium weapons by NATO forces during the bombing, despite repeated calls for a moratorium on their use from NGO's, many national governments, and even the EU parliament.

⁹¹ Nazi air forces bombed Belgrade on April 6th (Palm Sunday) of 1941 without prior declaration of war, in a four-day campaign that was later revealed by Luftwaffe commanders to have had a primarily 'political-terrorist character' and was entitled *Operation Punishment*. Three years later, on April 16th and 17th (Orthodox Easter day), Allied forces carpet-bombed the city, wreaking even more damage than the Nazi bombing and killing over a thousand civilians for a return of 18 German military losses.

while others such as *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 2000), hereafter referred to as *LTLF*, and *War Live!* (Bajić, 2000) offered perspectives on the bombing which, in various ways, differed from those being simultaneously promoted by state-controlled media outlets and cinematic productions (particularly until Milošević's removal from office in October of 2000).

It is interesting to note that using Rosenstone's vastly influential work on historically-themed films – in which fictional features about actual historical events or personages can for the most part be understood to fall either into the categories of 'mainstream drama' or 'innovative drama' – that in the case of these aforementioned Serbian NATO bombing-themed films this formal and aesthetic distinction also aligns with the films' ideological orientation. In other words, those titles which were received by critics as examples of 'patriotic propaganda' are by and large also those that employ the main principles which Rosenstone identifies as characteristic of 'mainstream drama' – in particular the use of a clear narrative structure (beginning, middle, end); uplifting ending; history as closed, completed and unitary past (no admission of doubt or alternative possibility); an emotionalised and personalised view of the past; and a view of history as process (i.e. analytical splitting along lines of gender, class, politics etc, common in written history, is not used in film) (Rosenstone, 2012: 53-54). On the other hand, the smaller number of films which would fall into Rosenstone's category of 'innovative drama' by virtue of their deviation from one or more of the above principles are also those that evidenced a much more complex ideological orientation with regard to their original contexts – often displaying a multi-faceted stance that included not only an opposition to the questionable 'truths' presented in Milošević's official discourses on the bombing – but also around the broader experience of a traumatic decade in Serbia, making sense of which was not only a paramount ethical and ideological challenge, but also an aesthetic and formal one.

This second thesis section is divided along a similar line in terms of how the multiple realities trope of madness is used at a formal and aesthetic level as a means for conceptualising trauma in post-Yugoslav cinemas. While the films discussed previously in chapter 5 (*Fuse, Mirage, Loving Glances*) would certainly be closer to the conventions of Rosenstone's 'mainstream drama' (and thus, owing to these repeated formal patterns, warranted a discussion that grouped them together), a separate chapter will here be devoted

to the close reading of one film (Petrović's *LTLF*) which is a unique example of 'innovative drama' in its use of the 'multiple realities' trope of madness for articulating trauma on screen. Therefore, continuing to address the key question for this second thesis section (in what way has madness provided conceptual tools for engaging with traumatic experiences in post-Yugoslav cinemas?), this chapter will focus on a close analysis of Petrović's film as an example of a radically experimental deviation from the more 'simple' cases of the multiple realities trope discussed in the previous chapter.

As with the tropes discussed in the previous chapter, so too here there is a strong emphasis on madness as a perceptual instability that obstructs the cognitive narrative processing effort to comprehend trauma – although in Petrović's film the crucial distinction is that no hierarchy between an objective diegetic reality and the traumatised subjective one is demarcated. Instead, the only relation to the text offered is one in which the spectator must identify with the frustrating experience of the traumatised protagonist, Boris, forever unable to reconcile the diverse fragments of his personal memory, memories of others, and various mediated versions of events into a cohesive narrative. I will therefore be hoping to outline the ways in which Petrović's trope of madness structures the cinematic experience of the spectator, informing a complex simulated experience of temporality, space (physical reality of objects), and society (as totality of human relationships), that ultimately offers a way of thinking, feeling, and (not) knowing, about the traumas of the bombing period.

Unlike in *Fuse* or *Loving Glances* for example, the spectator's experience of this perceptual instability (and thus the ensuing difficulties in processing narrative to create knowledge about the traumatic event) is continuously escalated throughout the film rather than being quickly closed within the same scene in which it is opened (in *Fuse* for example, effectively the challenge to the spectator's ability to process the narrative is only brief, before the 'key' is given which will aid interpretation of the 'multiple realities' for the remainder of the film). Petrović's film, on which there are currently only a handful of published paragraphs in two excellent but brief articles,⁹² is therefore a ground-breaking and imaginative experimental work which adapts the 'multiple realities' master trope in a way which extends the possibilities of the filmic medium for engaging with trauma and represents perhaps the single most unfairly neglected cinematic response to Yugoslav

⁹² See Kronja (2009) and Daković (2004).

break-up (arising largely perhaps due to its DIY production and almost non-existent subsequent distribution).

6.2. Milutin Petrović and *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom*

Before entering into the analysis of the film itself however, I would first briefly offer some relevant contextual information relating to the film's director/editor/scriptwriter/producer/composer, Milutin Petrović, as well as an outline of the film's formal approach and synopsis, and, thirdly, the concerns of existing literature on it.

Until 2000, Milutin Petrović was known in Yugoslavia (and particularly Serbia) mainly as a former rock musician, having played in a few Belgrade bands of the 1980s, and as a director of documentaries and ads which were often critical of the then Serb President, Slobodan Milošević, and his regime during the 1990s. Having been consistently vocal in this opposition, it is perhaps no surprise that this work was largely funded by the private sector, since state funding was both unavailable to and, presumably, undesired by, him.⁹³

However, in the wake of the aforementioned NATO bombing of Serbia and Montenegro, he moved into more sustained film-making activities (which continue to this day),⁹⁴ marked by his debut feature, *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom*. The film was produced on a 'zero' budget, according to Petrović,⁹⁵ and shot in digital – entirely without any funding or backing from the Ministry of Culture for Serbia (a fact made explicit by a title card in the film's closing credits). However, while there is therefore little ambiguity about where Petrović stands vis-à-vis the political authorities in Serbia of the period, his debut feature is actually very complex in negotiating the political contexts of its production, and has thereby attracted critical praise in its offering viewers 'respite' from 'binaristic

⁹³ Aside from some initial work for Radio-TV Belgrade in 1989, Petrović mainly worked in TV advertising for the next decade and occasionally also on documentary films such as *Jasmina i Rat* (1999) as an editor. Only with his second feature film, *South by Southeast* (2005) did he secure some degree of public financing – a 16.5k euro budget from a Belgrade city funding competition.

⁹⁴ In 2011, Petrović was continuing his focus on taboo subjects and trauma in Serbian society, with a feature documentary about the work of a Belgrade counselling service for victims of incest and sexual abuse.

⁹⁵ See his 2005 interview with Balkan Media e-zine, in which Petrović also claims that, aside from those working on the film, nobody knew of its production until halfway through shooting, when staff from the Film Institute, previously oblivious to the project, contacted him to confirm if the film was truly being produced. More on his political stance can be read in the following interview: http://cineasta.casadelest.org/uk/template_permalink.asp?id=112

discourses of masochistic applauding of NATO' and 'regime patriotism' (Daković, 2004: 200) which dominated public discourse on the bombing at the time.⁹⁶

The techniques by which this escape from the polarising ideological certainties of the time is achieved are derived in part from Petrović's affinity for the so-called Yugoslav Black Wave cinema of the late 1960's, and most notably the aesthetic and narrative approaches of Dušan Makavejev. In particular Petrović's debut film can be seen as a modern remake of *Innocence Unprotected* (Makavejev, 1968), which Levi has referred to as a 'compilation film' (Levi, 2007: 18), it being a collage of images from various sources, including:

- The first Yugoslav sound film (from which Makavejev's film takes its name), *Innocence Unprotected*. The original was made in 1941-3,⁹⁷ under Nazi occupation, by a gymnast and showman called Dragoljub Aleksić, well known for his self-publicising activities. The film is a somewhat crude fantasy in which Aleksić plays himself and battles for recognition of his gymnastic feats and also for the love of a local girl whom an evil mother wishes to marry off with a wealthy but cruel neighbour. Having never been released, the film survived the war literally buried (by a crew member who sought to hide it from German officials) and only resurfaced again in 1968 when Makavejev came across it and chose to base his next project on it. He inter-cut this original film with:
- Footage of Nazi occupation in Yugoslavia from the period 1941-1944;
- Newsreels from wartime Nazi propaganda offices, showing progress on the Eastern front;
- Newsreels from a proto-nationalist organisation called 'New Serbia'⁹⁸;
- Footage of numerous interviews with surviving cast and crew members of Aleksić's original *Innocence Unprotected*.

⁹⁶ The film also enjoyed international festival success, winning awards at both Mannheim and Sochi International film festivals amongst others. However, having had little formal distribution either domestically or internationally, its impact with audiences at the box office was somewhat limited – although it was belatedly given a domestic DVD release and also continues to circulate on unofficial web distribution channels.

⁹⁷ The mystery surrounding this production is evidenced by virtue of the varying dates of production given in different sources – Wikipedia has 1941, Imdb has 1942, and Pavle Levi 1943.

⁹⁸ Incidentally, 'Nova Srbija' is also the name of a conservative political party founded in Serbia in 1997, some fifty years after the original footage used by Makavejev was made. I have however been unable to identify the source of this original footage used by Makavejev.

It is worth outlining these details of Makavejev's film, since Petrović's *LTLF* comprises similar elements (listed below), thereby clearly activating both within his own film, and across various other media discourses (which include Yugoslav cinematographic history, film as record of wartime experience, propaganda newsreel, etc.), a series of complex inter-textual relationships. *LTLF* comprises:

- A fictional narrative of a former state-television editor, Boris, now housed in a makeshift psychiatric ward in a Belgrade bomb shelter during the NATO bombing after the strike on the TV station where he was working. His condition confounds doctors at the institution, so much so that one of them decides to perform a Rorschach test on him in order to reach a diagnosis.⁹⁹
- This test prompts a highly cinematic fantasy from Boris, which is also shown to the viewer. It represents a slightly unusual blend of Hollywood genres in which two contract killers go about their jobs, while also involved in the trivialities of day to day life and the deception of those around them (wives, girlfriends, etc.) about their true vocation and whereabouts. Unbeknownst to them however, their partners are equally duplicitous, actually working as escorts while pretending to be at university or at the shops.
- In addition, Petrović includes footage taken from NATO missile mounted cameras from the bombing (akin to Makavejev's use of images of Nazi propaganda demonstrating military superiority), and also,
- Scenes from an early example of post-war Yugoslav cinematography (not unlike Makavejev's use of the original *Innocence Unprotected*), *The Magic Sword* (Vojislav Nanović, 1950), which represented an attempt to produce a local version of a Hollywood fairy-tale epic, but here based on mainly Serbian folk tales and mythology. The actor who played the hero of this film and is seen as a young man in the black-and-white clips from it, Rade Marković, also stars in Boris's narrative, now an old man, as another inmate of the psychiatric ward.
- Finally, Petrović includes stills, documentary, and news report images of the actual destruction of the state Radio-TV station in April 1999 (again recalling Makavejev's use of footage of bomb damage from Belgrade).

⁹⁹ N.B. Only the first two aspects listed here represent new filming that Petrović did for the film: everything else is 'found' footage.

Land of Truth, Love and Freedom can perhaps also therefore be described as something of a 'compilation film' – a mixed media discursive space, which engages ideological and aesthetic conventions of many different genres, and practices of moving image production, utilising highly inter-textual dynamics in its structuring of the viewers' experience. This specific aspect of Petrović's work (engagement with Black Wave aesthetics and intertextuality) will be explored later in the chapter in terms of such film-making as social practice in late Milošević-era Serbia, and the relevance of *LTLF* to analysis of late 1990s media discourse concerning the bombing. Prior to expanding the analysis in such a way however, I will first offer something which is currently lacking from the available literature on the film, namely a close reading of some of the film's formal components, particularly those which facilitate an engagement with trauma through the trope of madness.

Indeed, while the film's unorthodox and innovative aesthetic qualities have tended to provide the focus for previous discussion, this has, in the case of both existing essays on the subject, stopped short of a close reading of how such devices operate or indeed of the centrality of trauma and madness therein. In what is the most substantial piece available on *LTLF*, Daković adopts a Discourse analysis approach, looking at representations of the conflict in state media outlets and various films of the late 1990s, before identifying and briefly discussing two films (*LTLF* and *War Live!*) which seemingly offer a more nuanced and complex vision of the period that is able to:

...textually tame and reshape the overdone, confusing nationalism and ethical pluralism of the period of the bombardment. Naturally the true image of war, if such a thing exists, is elusive, illusive and simulcrative, a mere copy of the world that is able to exist only in its own framework. Yet *War Live!* and *Land of Truth* generate for posterity a relevant image of the 'aggression' and of the collective nightmare, gaining supreme importance as a form of therapy for the tortured nation. (Daković, 2004: 212)

It seems logical therefore, especially in light of Daković's assumption of an essentially therapeutic potential at work within the spectatorship of such a film, to explore the relevance of trauma further and examine how it operates at the cinematic level. The first task will therefore be to provide a detailed close reading of how the traumatic experiences of the bombing are translated into the audio-visual medium.

Furthermore, Kronja (2009), in a short article covering Petrović's first three films, also places emphasis on 'the aesthetics of paranoid realities'. She sees the docu-fiction approach as one being primarily utilised to emphasise 'conspiracy as a principle of reality' and offer 'an open critique of the political manipulations, corruption and the collapse of moral values, all of which have shaken the new globalised world order as well as a tiny part of it, the Serbian society.' (Kronja, 2009). Kronja therefore places Petrović's aesthetic approach as an attempt to articulate the chaos of post-socialist political and social transformation, unfolding in an unprecedented ideological vacuum. Finally she also places significance on the post-modern qualities of Petrović's work, seeing in this the evidence of Epstein's (1995) insights into post-communism as an inherently post-modern cultural experience (this aspect is explored also in chapter three of my thesis in relation to another film, *Marshall Tito's Spirit*). Kronja's interpretation is also largely consistent with Daković's more general account of the use of documentary footage in various instances of post-Yugoslav cinemas, which doesn't mention *LTLF*, but does nonetheless make an observation relevant to it:

...their [use of docu footage] manifold effects include the re-evaluation of the past, the correction of official public and collective history through metaphorical and symbolic restructuring, the emphasis on the repetitive model of events and the circular temporal regime, as well as the mapping of nostalgic individual and private remembrance. (Daković, 2008: 118)

As the subsequent analysis will outline, these conclusions can also be extended to *LTLF* and the use of documentary footage (along with a variety of other media text types and practices) is instrumental in Petrović's multiple realities trope of madness as a response to the traumas of post-Yugoslav transition. The second key priority is therefore to highlight how documentary aesthetics and docu-fiction techniques, identified to be so crucial to post-Yugoslav cinemas by Daković in the article above, are employed in Petrović's *LTLF* – which is, as I intend to illustrate, one of the most innovative examples of how audio-visual documents of various kinds have been used in feature film as a means of articulating traumatic histories.

Therefore, both Kronja's and Daković's studies focus on Petrović's aesthetics as an essential aspect of an effort to create a meaningful portrayal of the experience of living through a highly unstable period, involving, amongst other things, a three month conflict.

However, since neither offers anything resembling a closer reading of how these aesthetics operate, I feel that this represents the most logical place to begin in expanding the understanding of such a text as *LTLF*, and, furthermore, to highlight another core dynamic which both studies have not chosen to focus on – the function of tropes of madness as a device for engaging traumatic experience.

Hence I hope that ultimately the analysis will further elaborate on Petrović's film as a medium for approaching memories and understandings of the bombing and of life in Serbia during this period, just as Daković and Kronja's work has done, albeit basing the analysis on a detailed close reading of the film as a whole, which is currently absent even in these two otherwise excellent articles. The chapter structure will be thus: the first three sections will focus on the individual text of *LTLF* and its innovative techniques for structuring the 'multiple realities trope of madness', while the final section will feed the discussion of the individual film into relations with other films and media of the time and topic. Only after this close reading will we be well placed to answer how a film like *LTLF* can be understood as a response to a traumatic decade – and, moreover, one of the most unique responses to emerge from it.

6.2.1. Temporality and narrative structure after trauma: Madness as failed knowledge process

The cliché is that things are never as the psychiatrists believe – instead the truth is always that which they consider to be some form of madness

These are the words of Boris, the young TV editor – and asylum patient – in *LTLF*, when discussing the tradition of madness in cinema with his psychiatrist, just before he is to be re-diagnosed via the method of a Rorschach test. This piece of meta-cinematic commentary alludes to a common function of tropes of madness, wherein a character who is marked within the diegesis as being 'mad' is also the one who acts as a facet of identification for the audience (for what is known as secondary cinematic identification – i.e. identification with characters).¹⁰⁰ In such a way therefore, that which signifies the madness of the hero/protagonist/narrative focaliser is given additional prominence

¹⁰⁰ Primary cinematic identification is usually understood as the process whereby the spectator identifies with his or her own gaze, and hence secondary cinematic identification is preferred as a term to distinguish the identification with certain diegetic agents/characters.

('flagged' so to speak) and thus becomes constructed as a privileged and favoured perspective – or as Boris puts it 'the truth'. This is often achieved by representing the institutional powers surrounding the mad protagonist as cruel and inhuman or by prioritising the internal life of the mad character by way of facial close-ups, point-of-view shots or rendering the audience privy to a reality that corresponds with the mad protagonist's perspective (showing 'hallucinations', which are in the diegesis only visible to the protagonist) and so on. This dynamic was evident also within the films discussed in the previous chapter wherein audience identification with traumatised and hallucinating protagonists was achieved by, at least partial, recourse to such techniques.

It is for this reason that I have placed the word 'mad' in inverted commas here simply because, in these tropes of madness, the mad character is usually in no way indicated as having a mental disability or illness in a specific medical sense. Instead, these mad heroes are usually perfectly able-bodied and articulate for example, but have for reasons to do with authority, repression, or order been demarcated as mad by the society depicted on screen – in other words, a question mark is established over the validity of the mad diagnosis which has been foisted on the character by the society around him. Hollywood cinema for example also has a long history of valorising madness in such a way, with films such as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (Forman, 1975), *Full Metal Jacket* (Kubrick, 1987), *Twelve Monkeys* (Gilliam, 1995) and *Fight Club* (Fincher, 1999). In all cases, the protagonist is in some way designated as being mad but precisely in such a way so as to invite questioning over how far we as an audience are willing to accept this diagnosis (and the consequences it is used to justify). Moreover, each film has a strong thematic focus on some aspect of American social and political life, with which the trope of madness engages – be it the use of EST, the Vietnam War, or the moral vacuum of late capitalist consumerism respectively.¹⁰¹ (On the other hand, representations of madness in the sense of disability or illness are usually established by the lack of this question mark over the 'diagnosis').

This crucial difference of how the mad character is constructed is therefore highly dependent on the way identification is (or is not) structured around them. Indeed, as in the aforementioned Hollywood productions, so too in *LTLF*, some of the former strategies for

¹⁰¹ This tradition is not one found exclusively within Hollywood, but can be traced also throughout 18th century literary Romanticism in Western Europe, or Soviet-era cinema with Tarkovsky for instance. I include only a few references for the sake of brevity, but essentially, the tradition in question is both long-established in various cultures and not confined solely to cinema.

facilitating audience identification with Boris are used,¹⁰² and thus it can be said that by virtue of such techniques, the spectator is offered a 'position of madness' as a point of secondary cinematic identification within the diegesis. However, this is not the only method by which madness structures audience experience in this film and so, with a view to elaborating further, I wish to examine first some aspects of the temporal experience that the film offers.

For instance, the opening credits of the film are sound-tracked by a slow, cyclical, heavily-distorted, guitar riff mainly using the musical interval of a diminished fifth, notable for creating a disharmonious, jarring effect. Interestingly, the arrangement and texture of the piece is not unlike the music ('sounds' would be a more accurate term) which was later found amongst those used to disorientate and mentally weaken prisoners in Guantanamo Bay in the wake of 9/11. Hence from the outset of *LTLF*, there is the creation of an effect of temporal disorientation by virtue of a subversion of the traditional markers by which music acknowledges the passage of time (melodic progression, rhythmic change, etc.) combined with a discomforting tonal arrangement, which renders the accompanying images of destruction (over which the credits are shown) additionally sinister and tortuous.

Such an initial strategy of subverting the establishment of a linear diegetic time is to become a key feature of Petrović's film throughout, by virtue of various further devices. For example, while the aforementioned music is playing over the credits, the film's temporality is situated very directly within the recent history of the bombing, by the use of footage taken from NATO missile-mounted cameras as they close in on targets – juxtaposed with swirling flames of destruction against which the credits are superimposed. The period of bombing is hence re-constructed as cinematic present for these opening minutes of the film.

However, after the last missile strikes its target (the TV station) at the end of the credits, the image becomes one of incoherent static signifying a break or rupture in transmission. This eventually cuts to a black-and-white scene of a medieval city, identified as 'Spring in Serbia, a long time ago', where a three-minute sequence involving a medieval court (in which noblemen and peasants compete for a princess's favour) unfolds. These scenes are taken directly from *The Magic Sword* (Nanović, 1950), an example of an early

¹⁰² In fact, the audience is privy to the hallucinations of not only Boris, but also another patient, Nebojša, thus unquestioningly structuring diegetic truth, by aligning audience identification with such positions, to reside with such characters and not the doctors and nurses around them.

big-budget post-war Yugoslav production which sought to utilise a successful Hollywood genre blueprint (fantasy epic)¹⁰³ in a local context. This short segment opens up additional temporal positions for the spectator – both a mythical pre-modern present, wherein the events of *TMS* unfold, and a post-WWII one derived from the act of spectatorship of this piece of early Yugoslav cinematographic production.

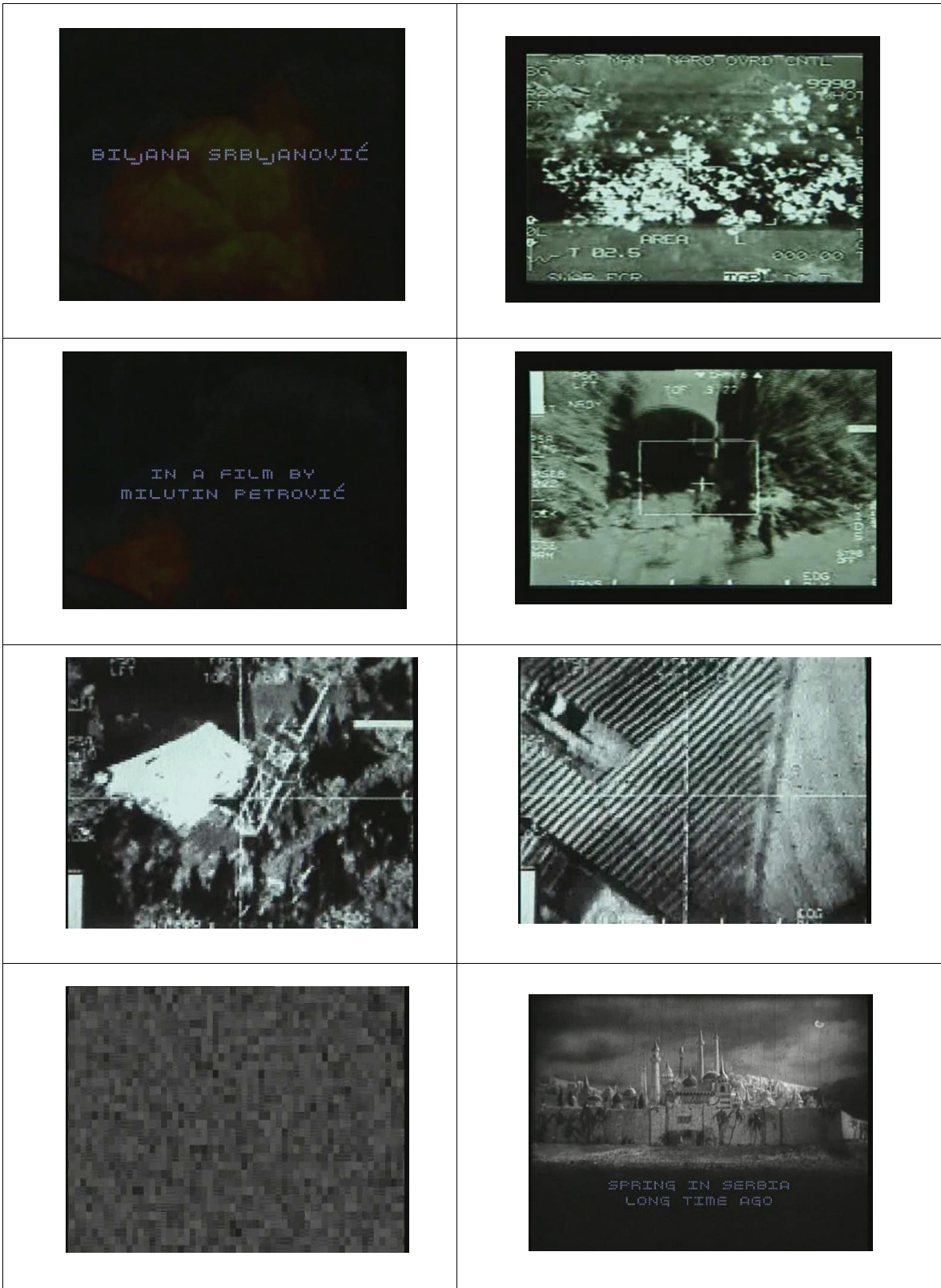
After a few minutes, *LTLF* returns its viewer to the present of 1999, by showing the black-and-white interlude to have been a vision of a disturbed old man and asylum inmate in a psychiatric hospital and bomb shelter during the conflict (the frame turns into a flash of light, which cuts to a facial close-up of the man with his eyes illuminated by the same light), accompanied by a title card indicating 'Spring in Serbia, 1999'. The casting of this man is additionally striking, especially for a domestic audience who would recognise the actor as the very same Rade Marković who, as a young man, starred in the scenes from *The Magic Sword* which we have just witnessed. This close-up of the old actor is then followed by that of a nurse arriving to calm him after his hallucination, all the while referring to him as Marković despite his insistence that he is in fact Nebojša (the name of his character in *TMS*). This confusion over his identity, coupled with the sight of two different versions of Rade Marković, separated in time by 50 years, here compounds the sense of a highly porous temporal diegetic present, in which (mediated and mythologised) events from various historic periods seem also to be experienced in a present mode – re-lived so to speak and the boundaries between different planes of diegetic realities are already blurred.

From the outset therefore, *LTLF* is a film in which the singularity and linearity of diegetic time is consistently disrupted and problematised, creating an atypical temporal experience for the viewer (compared with many conventions of narrative cinema).¹⁰⁴ Having looked a little at how these effects are created, I wish now to consider the relevance of this to the experience of trauma, and the consequences for the functioning of narrative

¹⁰³ A number of films such as *The Thief of Baghdad* (Berger et al., 1940), *Sinbad the Sailor* (Wallace, 1947), and *Jungle Book* (Korda, 1942) had provided box office and Academy Award success for Hollywood, perhaps resulting from the audience demand for escapism from immediate war-time and post-war realities, wherein elements of spectacle are combined with a simplistic construction of benevolent vs. malevolent characters etc. This is in stark contrast to the noir cinema which also came to define Hollywood output of the same period (and which has endured the passage of time more successfully), characterised, above all else perhaps, by a morally-bankrupt society and the similarly shady anti-hero who negotiates its challenges – with good and evil inexorably intertwined at every turn.

¹⁰⁴ A recent study on narrative temporalities in cinema (Cameron, 2010) outlines 3 modes, subjective, schismic, and modular. Regardless of the narrative type in question however, it has long been established that temporal perceptions are key to the cognitive processing of images on screen into a coherent 'fabula' or 'story' by film audiences. See Bordwell (1985: 74-99).

within the film. Finally, I will bring this section of the chapter to a close with the ultimate significance of madness to these cinematic processes.



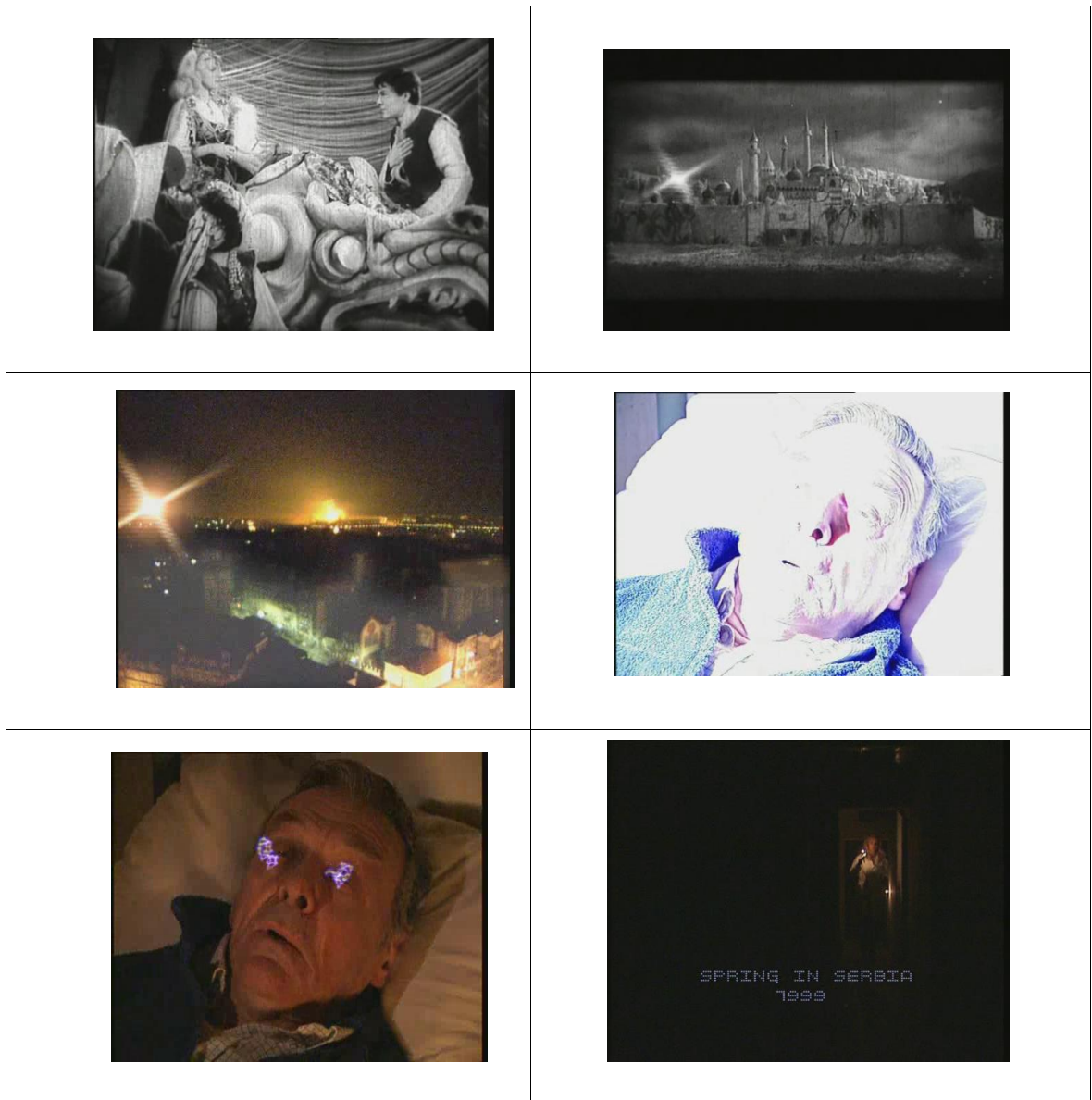


Fig. 6.1. Disruption of temporal singularity and linearity in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 1999)

Part of what seems to mark the Rade Marković/Nebojša character as mad within *LTLF* (i.e. that which draws dismissive patronising nods from the nurses) is that he believes that the bright lights which accompany his visions are to be understood as an imminent reckoning for his past wrongs (and not as the consequences of the bombs exploding above ground).¹⁰⁵ He tells Boris that these wrongs 'later return – always they're returning'. This however is not simply a case of 'embedding' wherein a scene is indicated as corresponding

¹⁰⁵ For Marković, the bomb blasts function akin to the knocking at the gate in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (which follows the murder of MacDuff, and which sends Macbeth into a delirious frenzy) – that rupture in narrative (which comes in a crucial 'hinge' point in Shakespeare's arrangement) in which temporal progression is briefly suspended and the trace of a trauma is manifest.

to a subjective vision of one particular character by way of a fade-in/out and a facial close-up for example.¹⁰⁶ Instead the sequence is initially framed by the subtitle ('Spring in Serbia, long time ago'), introducing the pseudo-documentary atmosphere of a reconstruction of past events. Similarly, later on when clips from *The Magic Sword* are again featured, it is only after some of the clips that Marković's face is shown in close up, indicating a subjective vision available only to one character within the diegesis. The flashback material is thereby not fully demarcated as belonging to a separate, subjective reality in contrast to the 'real' matter of the primary narrative (as is common with such an embedding device). Rather, the scenes which Marković witnesses are partially embedded within every layer of the cinematic reality, emphatically blurring the authority of an objective narrative. This effect is intensified by the use of a fictionalised cinematic myth – in clips from *TMS* – which is presented as a documentary window into the past. Rather than using documentary footage as a window to the past to undermine present-day mythologising discourses about historical experience (as Daković outlines in numerous post-Yugoslav films in the essay quoted earlier), Petrović instead presents cinematic myth about the past (from *The Magic Sword*) as the documentary window to the past – an inversion which points to a far more radical and post-modern notion of how the past might be understood in the post-Yugoslav context.

In any case, with the clips from *The Magic Sword*, we are presented not with a particular character's memories of this or that (as might happen with a standard embedding device), but instead with a particular character's repressed material – those repressed traces of a traumatic experience, returning against the wishes and will of the character in question. This is why, in the initial scenes from *TMS*, we see Marković's face *after* the vision (since *it* comes to him) and not before (which would indicate a controlled and willed act of reminiscence instead). The consequences of using such a device for the representation of trauma, derived from a modification of common ways of structuring memories on screen, go beyond creating a simple distinction between the two for the spectator however. Instead, they very directly re-create the temporal disruptions characteristic of traumatic experience, in their impact upon the narrative structure of the film.

So for example, when Boris later mentions his experience of being inside the TV station when it was struck by a missile, there is an immediate cut to images of the station being struck as Boris speaks – again experiencing the past event in the present tense. Herein

¹⁰⁶ See Bordwell (1985) for more on the narrative practice of 'embedding'.

lies the key to Petrović's articulation of trauma as return of the repressed on screen – by his manipulation of diegetic time to incorporate past events in such a present tense. Interestingly this event of the TV station's bombing is then presented using a series of still images of the destroyed studio and offices, which completely freeze narrative time (including a shot of a broken clock stuck on the minute of the missile strike) – offering instead timeless fragments of the traumatic experience. Once more, the manipulation of diegetic time is harnessed to illustrate the disruption to sensory and temporal perception wrought by the experience of bombs and destruction. The sudden interjection of repressed material is in the form of temporally stilted fragments – not a clear re-run of the original event but instead an allusive and fleeting echo of it (either Nebojša's fantasies of the clear moral universe represented by the simplistic folk epic of *The Magic Sword* or Boris's freeze-framed stills and news report images of the TV station missile strike).

What then are the narrative consequences of structuring the viewer's temporal experience in such a way as to reflect the aftermath of traumatic experience and the return of the repressed? It might first be useful to define briefly how we think of narrative here. On a core level we might follow a basic definition from Stam et al. (1992), that narrative 'can be understood as the recounting of two or more events (or a situation and an event) that are logically connected, occur over time, and are linked by a consistent subject into a whole' (1992: 69). More specifically, on the temporal aspect of narrative, Rimmon-Kenan (1983) has written that 'temporal succession is sufficient as a minimal requirement for a group of events to form a story... causality can (always?) be projected onto temporality' (1983: 19). Already we can see therefore that Petrović's approach to constructing temporal experience in his film will have significant disruptive consequences for the operation of narrative. Moreover, if we take one of the fundamental operations of narrative to be 'a way of coming to grips with the meaning of events, of perceiving the transformative effects of an action (Stam et al., 1992: 70), which essentially draws on Gerald Prince's writing on narrative as a form of knowledge, then we might say that by structuring temporality in such a way – Petrović renders narrative impotent to operate as a knowledge process. In doing so he reflects the traumatic experience as one which challenges, and ultimately overloads, the subject's capacity to integrate such an event, situation, or experience into existing symbolic structures. Since the event with which the film is concerned is the experience of turmoil and conflicts of 1999, then the implication for knowledge is clear – no cause-and-effect

structuring (narrative) is possible in the wake of trauma, since the very definition of the latter is that it renders the former inoperable. Petrović skilfully builds this paradox into his film's temporal register, so that the spectator's experience of temporal disorientation and confusion is a direct reflection of this fact. In this sense, the multiple realities trope is thoroughly extended also to structure the viewer's relation to the text in *LTLF* for the entirety of the film (and not only the beginning of a few scenes as in the previous films discussed in the last chapter).

I will now summarise some of this section's points before finally drawing in the relevance of madness to the discussion. In Petrović's *LTLF*, as in much research and writing on the subject, the traumatic experience is one which undermines the linear experience of temporality by virtue of the inevitable return of repressed facets of the traumatic episode. This gives way to a sort of eternal present in the film, in which echoes or fragments of past events often unfold in the present tense – the experience of which (amongst other things) is what marks out characters like Marković and Boris as mad: they are unable to distinguish between past and present registers. This renders their madness a very specific maladjustment to reality, which arises from the experience of traumatic events (for both characters this is that of not only immediate bombing, but also complicity in the suffering and manipulation of citizens at the hands of the state – for Marković, post-WWII, and for Boris, during the Milošević-era). As a result, the audience's identification with such characters is extended to the experience of temporality as suffered by them, in which no cause-and-effect structuring of event is possible and hence narrative as knowledge process cannot function. It is for this reason that Boris's Rorschach fantasy takes the structure of a Hollywood genre film (albeit in a localised setting); only here is the comfort of cause-and-effect, linear temporality, and hence narrative attainable. However, the naivety of this construction is also implicitly and simultaneously mocked in Boris's fantasy, by virtue of the humoristic parody of a cause-and-effect sequence, in which the killers cover their tracks after each murder by placing their strangled, fully-clothed, victim on the floor of the bathroom and then removing one sock and shoe before drizzling a little water on his foot – in a farcical attempt to indicate a bath-time accident as cause of death to potential investigators. The comedy is thus derived from a gentle mocking of the simplistic plot-driven narrative in which cause-and-effect understandings are taken to their reductive extreme. The parody of mainstream narrative film conventions reaches a climax in the

film's ending in which a rather forceful bomb blast suggests that the shelter/hospital has been struck. At this point Boris enters into some heavenly fantasy space (lush rural setting, sunshine, and a beautiful girl from his earlier Rorschach fantasy) as upbeat music kicks in and Marković suddenly also appears to bless Boris and the girl's romantic union. As all these feel-good elements of a happy ending fall into place (positive romantic resolution, health, happiness, etc.) we are suddenly reminded of the childishness of such wish fulfilment: Boris turns directly to the camera and delivers a zesty middle finger salute to the viewer before the final fade to black – a joke at the expense of an audience trained to expect the narrative climax to resolve all lingering ambiguities and loose ends.



Fig. 6.2. Boris's ultimate reveal in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 1999)

Thus, in incorporating this temporal disturbance into the spectator's experience of the film and deliberately imposing limits on the spectator's potential for a cognitive narrative processing, Petrović achieves a further effect of making the attainment of comprehensive knowledge about a traumatic event such as the bombing seemingly impossible. The occasional use of documentary aesthetics and material is at once a reminder of this knowledge attempt, and its frustrating malfunction. Instead the challenge to the viewer becomes the same as the challenge to Boris and Nebojša – they must somehow maintain the rigid dichotomy of real and imaginary, which forms a key aspect of

sanity, despite this handicap in their efforts to make sense of their experiences. This is why, in Marković/Nebojša's vision, we see the part of *The Magic Sword* in which the men competing for the princess's hand are asked a series of questions:

- 'What is sharpest in this world?'
- 'What is strongest in this world?'
- 'What is most beautiful in this world?'

Most of the men answer far too literally ('a good sword', 'a beautiful woman', etc.) and in the end all are rejected. Nebojša succeeds by virtue of the fact that he understands the imaginary to also be a component of our reality – and in such a way escapes from the literal-mindedness from which the other competitors suffer by responding that 'truth, love and freedom' are in turn the sharpest, strongest, and most beautiful things which can be found. The episode is relevant since, in it the men are really being asked to test their concept of reality and the place in it for the imaginary (none of the literal-minded men offer 'a dragon' as a response for example). This is exactly the challenge which the 1999 Marković is grappling with, the same as the one tested in *TMS* – that of balancing the real and the imaginary, made increasingly difficult by the temporal disruptions of trauma which render him unable to utilise narrative as cause-and-effect based knowledge process.

By virtue of Petrović's structuring of temporality in the film, and the resultant consequences for the (non-)function of narrative in all sections of the film apart from Boris's fantasy, the viewer too experiences the events of the film as hallucination – utterly devoid of the knowledge structures of cause-and-effect. The dynamics of such a viewing experience thus reflect exactly the same madness with which both Boris and Nebojša must contend with – not of seeing things which others do not, but of being unable to distinguish between this and a constant external reality. The disruption in question here is the breakdown of the cyclical processing of experience into knowledge about the world which in turn provides the framework for the reception and processing of subsequent experience – and so on (see the discussion of Fuery, 2004 in the previous chapter for more on this). Boris, Nebojša and the *LTLF* spectator are thus equally unable to make sense of their experiences by organising knowledge around the situations and events they find themselves in because these experiences are so unprecedented (traumatic) and because available knowledge frameworks are so untrustworthy (see subsequent section) that any objective notion of stable reality becomes hopelessly elusive.

Indeed, when one considers the nature of the conflict more closely, this dynamic of hallucination becomes ever more relevant since the war permeated into the everyday realities of the population of Serbia and Montenegro in a highly unusual way: some semblance of normality would characterise the day (e.g. people would try to go to work) and then the evenings would be spent waiting for the siren which signalled instruction to descend into basements and cellars for the night. Furthermore, by virtue of the fact that NATO's campaign relied upon an overwhelming superiority in terms of technology and mastery of (air-) space, many of the images from the conflict did not correspond to the more familiar war-time reality of trenches, fronts or machine guns which one might have expected (especially from the experience of 1991-95). Instead, citizens were faced with the jarring experience of attempting to continue their day-to-day lives while, at night, stealth bombers dropped million-dollar cruise missiles on various parts of the built environment. It is this jarring presence of the unreal within the everyday which defines the hallucinatory aspect of the experience, and which Petrović's particular docu-fiction aesthetic re-creates.

6.2.2. Identification and point-of-view: Situating the gaze in space and ideology

In the first chapter section I discussed how Petrović structures diegetic time in order to reflect the temporal disorientations resulting from trauma, and the consequences for a subject's ability to construct narrative as a knowledge process, ultimately contributing to an inability to maintain a 'sane' dichotomy between reality and fiction. However, in this next section I wish to examine a different formal component of the film: that of the structuring of the spectator's gaze through point-of-view shots, general use of camera angles, cutting and so on. I will contend that, through his manipulation of these aspects of technique, Petrović again references a dynamic of madness – though here in the sense of the ideological uncertainty and crisis of interpretational frameworks amidst the crumbling socialist order and exposure to various competing rivals (be it Milošević's unpopular government or NATO/'the West').

As in the previous section, this process is one which is evident from the film's outset, specifically, by way of Petrović's use of footage taken from actual NATO missile-mounted cameras as they close-in and detonate upon their targets. In the domestic context of the film's production (coming only one year after the bombing ended) this creates an unusual effect, owing to the cumulative workings of contexts of reception, the ideological

implications of point-of-views shots, and the transference of 'documentary' footage into the context of a (pseudo-)fictive text.

For instance, the shots provided by each missile as it closes in on a building, factory, or bridge represent at once a very common cinematic spatial experience – that of a zoom effect. This is a common device for privileging the position of the spectator in terms of narrative knowledge (enabling movements which usually are beyond the diegetic possibilities of characters) and of focusing attention on one particular detail within the frame. So, in that sense the spatial experience offered here is no different – what makes it unusual, especially in the contexts of domestic reception, is the fact that such a spatial effect is experienced from the point-of-view of a NATO missile. This is worth noting for two reasons – first of all because of the choice to offer the point-of-view of an object (not a character, as is overwhelmingly the case when the camera is aligned with a position occupied in the diegesis by *something*). Secondly, the alignment of the audience's gaze with a NATO missile is striking precisely for the reason that domestic audiences within Serbia were only months prior to this looking 'down the barrel' of such weapons. So what is to be made of this rather conventional cinematic spatial effect, complicated by the presentation from a highly unusual point-of-view? What are the ideological implications of Petrović's handling of the audience's gaze, and moreover how does all this connect with madness?

Firstly, the images remind us of the inherent existence of power dynamics (by virtue of the alignment with an omnipotent force within the diegesis – a NATO missile) within the act of spectatorship, of which the gaze is a constituent component. Though such images often featured in documentaries on the subject of the bombing, Petrović here places them within a different context – in which cinematic identification is much more common (i.e. a fictive feature film) in order to utilise the process of identification as a tool for highlighting the ideological aspect of such footage. A neutral and transparent access to events and situations is thereby implied to be a fallacy; there is always an ideological component at work within any representation. This point is reinforced later on, in Boris's fantasy sequence, when the two *Pulp Fiction*-esque killers discuss various surveys and statistics about sexual habits around the world. While the younger killer accepts the findings at face value, the older one (played by Petrović himself) is much more sceptical, reminding his colleague that people often lie in surveys ('before in Victorian times there was such a culture of repression that everyone said they didn't have sex at all – now, after the sexual

revolution, there is a pressure to be always having sex. But actually, things are the same as they ever were... People just lie'). The point is clear – even supposedly objective methods for deriving knowledge about the world must occupy some ideological slant – just like the audience's gaze in *LTLF* is shown to be always implicated in some sort of power dynamic with the matter it shows. Petrović seemingly advances that such a resistance to the concept of an objective, consistent, and representable reality is perhaps the only rational approach to living in a society where information is managed either by socialist propaganda offices (as before) or, as was the case thereafter, corrupt political and media elites in a sham-democracy (as existed under Milošević until 2000).

What is more, in offering domestic audiences this opportunity of enjoyment in a free moving mastery of space, and identification with nigh-omnipotent destructive force, Petrović creates a curiously sado-masochistic experience for a Serbian audience, here invited to identify and take pleasure, in images which denote recent destruction on which they were on the receiving end. This sado-masochistic pleasure in victimhood was a key tenet of Milošević's political ideology of Serb Nationalism (myths of Kosovo Polje in 1389, Serb suffering under Ottoman rule, etc.), and is something implicitly engaged with by Petrović via the techniques of point-of-view to establish an ever-ideologically inflected perspective for the audience. Later however, the audience's gaze is situated in the position of one looking up from a Belgrade street at the night sky, illuminated by gun fire and rockets. This shot is one which invites identification with the helpless victims of the conflict, their impotence made evident in the lack of movement (contrasting it with the missile-cam shots) which indicates passivity in relation to the battle raging overhead. *LTLF* therefore offers multiple points of identification within the situation of the bombing, each time refusing to settle the perspective in one particular ideological position of either victim or aggressor. In other words, Petrović manipulates the inherent power dynamics of looking through a camera in order to always inflect the gaze with an ideological character but crucially chooses not to privilege a singular hegemonic position. Herein lies the nature of the aforementioned 'therapeutic respite from the binaristic media discourse of the period' (Daković, 2004: 200), which was discussed earlier. It is not that *LTLF* denies either that the bombing fostered a genuine victimhood, or that it involved aggression by a vastly more powerful force with complete mastery of space over their targets. Rather it is that the film questions exactly where in this dynamic the (domestic?) spectator might identify himself –

highlighting that the positions of victim, aggressor, or witness might be overlapping and not mutually exclusive, inducing a form of ideological ‘schizophrenia’ for audiences subjected to these incongruous and shifting identifications.

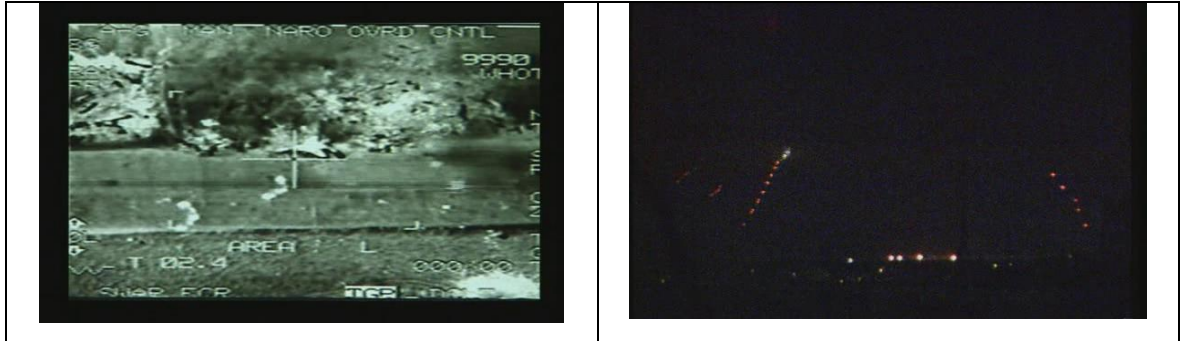


Fig. 6.3. Aggressor vs. victim points of identification in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 1999)



Fig. 6.4. Unsettling the stability of the spectator's gaze in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 1999)

This sort of constant unsettling of the stability of the audience's gaze is evident throughout the film – such as for example when close-ups are offered of Boris's face just before his Rorschach test, or when Djordje reads the newspaper in Boris's fantasy sequence. In both cases the scene is shown via a series of rapidly inter-cut shots of the character's face, each however with a slightly different camera angle: a rapid and jarring ‘re-set’ of

processes of identification in which each cut returns the spectator momentarily to a position 'outside' the text. The effect is to make the viewer suddenly highly aware of the positioning from which the gaze originates, highlighting the implicit power dynamics of looking and the inherent ideological connotation therein.

Likewise, when Petrović does occasionally choose to use a character-based point-of-view shot, (as in Boris's fantasy sequences when Biljana is getting dressed to leave Djordje's flat in the morning and we see her from his perspective), Petrović always introduces some highly alienating additional quality to the device. So, in this instance, Djordje's point-of-view shot of Biljana is constructed using a black-and-white image soundtracked by a disturbing white noise. The colours and audio are more akin to the missile-camera footage from the opening credits than the rest of Boris's Hollywood-esque fantasy sequence. This shot is then followed by another one, seemingly taken from a different black-and-white film, showing a male hand roughly touching a breast (and furthering the implication of Biljana as Djordje's prey), before returning us to a close-up of Djordje's face once more. Again therefore, point-of-view serves as a tool for exposing the attendant ideological implications present even within highly common cinematic devices with which the audience is familiar (the objectifying male point-of-view gaze directed at the female body), thus avoiding the falsity of a transparent, unmediated access to events, which needn't be questioned (like the opinion polls and surveys discussed by the killers). In this case the technique establishes a sinister duality within Djordje (which we will later learn derives from his secret life as a hired killer), and frames Biljana as his target, owing to the parallels which are invited between the missile footage and this shot (again, this will later come to be emphasised in his reaction to discovering her own secret identity – after which he kills her).

In summary therefore, Petrović's use of point-of-view shots within *LTLF* is an interesting and crucial aspect by which he engages the aesthetics of looking with the ethics of looking. By using various alienating modifications to very common ways of representing point-of-view, Petrović unsettles the process wherein the viewer is placed in a consistent and constant relation to the text (which is a common feature of narrative cinema). As a result one is frequently reminded of the act of watching, the inevitable power dimension that exists in the very concept of a cinematic gaze, and ultimately the fact that – as the killers' conversation about opinion polls also implies – no view of reality exists that is not in some way structured by an ideological position. The implications for the knowledge

attempt are once more significant, since the film is again systematically reminding us (just as Petrović, the older killer, reminds Djordje in relation to statistical surveys) that one must critically engage with the source, context and motives behind an utterance rather than accepting at face-value. Reality thereby becomes infinitely more complex, forever inflected by subjective positions from which one can only escape in a simplistic reduction (as in Boris's fantasy). *LTLF* thereby questions the validity of designating madness as a refusal to acknowledge an objective external reality – instead it implies that, in accordance with the spectator's experience of the film, the subjective reality is the only one with a valid claim to truth – especially within the immediate post-socialist context of ideological and authoritative vacuum (which, as Daković has pointed out in the case of Serbia and Montenegro, only really began in earnest in 2000) and where, in Petrović's vision, neither power nor media are to be trusted.

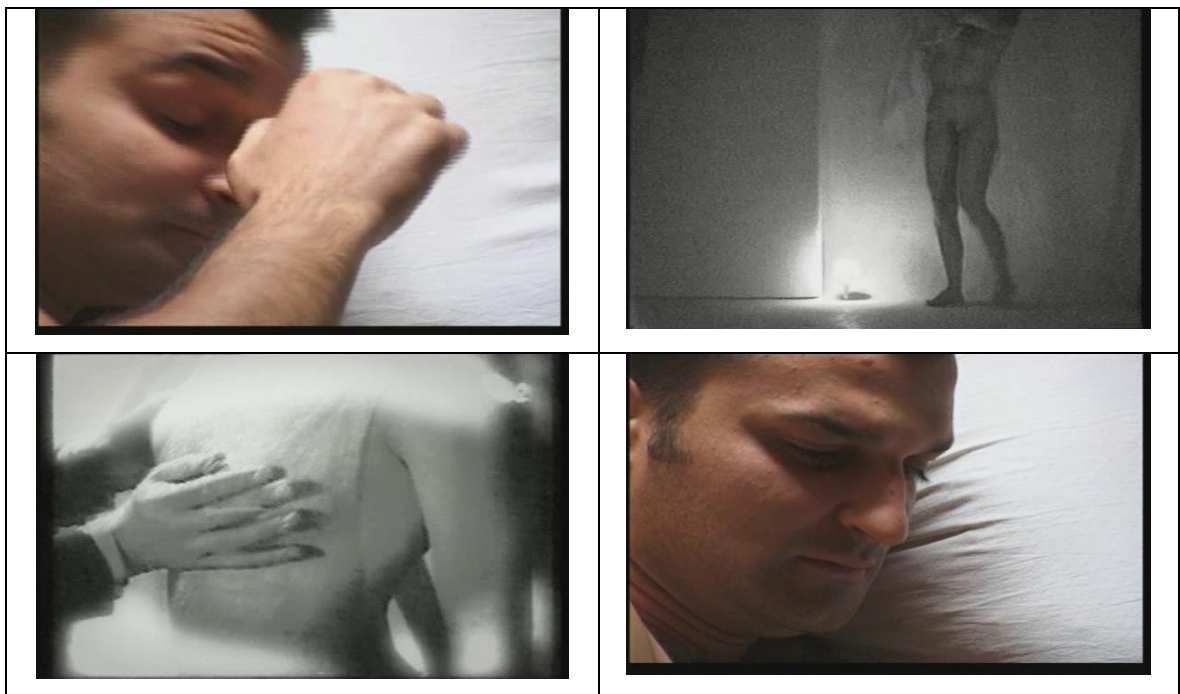


Fig. 6.5. The construction of Djordje's point-of-view in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* (Petrović, 1999)

The colour tonality and soundtrack of the second shot (recalling the earlier missile-camera shots) and the non-diegetic third shot – all point to the ideological dimension of the gaze and, in this case, its threatening objectifying element in the context of the gendered use here.

6.2.3. Casting and character: The reality of Petrović's fiction (and vice versa)

Finally, I wish to discuss Petrović's use of casting as the third essential component of the docu-fiction aesthetic which reflects the ideological uncertainty of post-socialist transition and the unintelligibility of social truths in the absence of reliable sources of information, furthering the hallucinatory effect of the experience of the 1999 conflict; yet another technique by which the multiple realities trope is extended to the spectator's relation to the text in *LTLF*.

In particular Petrović uses casting in a very specific way, so as to obstruct the creation of a diegetic reality as a closed hegemonic fantasy space – by virtue of frequent resort to techniques of documentary film-making for example. This includes casting actors or public figures in roles which bear significant resemblance to their off-screen public personas (in *LTLF* for instance the psychiatrist is played by Vanja Govorko – a well-known professional model and trained psychologist in Serbia; even Milutin Petrović appears in Boris's fantasy – playing a film director) and by the uses of simple devices such as having characters share a first name with the actors playing them. Such a crossover effect is not only evident across the boundary of film and 'real world', but also operates within the various layers of intra-diegetic reality of the film. So, for example, Boris's fantasy of killers and prostitutes is mainly populated by faces that the audience has already seen, by way of other hospital employees and so on, now drafted into playing different roles within Boris's Rorschach dream. This emphatic intertextuality between different planes of filmic reality, which then spills over into also overlapping with our everyday off-screen reality, extends also to Petrović's other films – which are often populated by characters from previous work (Boris can be seen in the closing shots of the asylum in Petrović's second film, *South by Southeast* for instance).¹⁰⁷ Petrović thereby consistently utilises casting in such a way so as to blur the boundaries between theatrical performance (in the film) and social identity outside it. He then takes this principle into every aspect of his diegetic reality, by further

¹⁰⁷ Indeed Petrović's first two films form a relatively closely-knit inter-textual correspondence – each focusing on a protagonist struggling with mental instability as a direct result of the ideological and political organisations of Serbian society in the transition years. In *South by Southeast*, docu-fiction aesthetics are again utilised in a narrative in which renowned Yugoslav actress Sonja Savić, playing herself, is pursued by the state's secret police after the kidnapping of a child involves those in the upper echelons of power (one of whom is the child's father). Again the spectator must endure ongoing uncertainties in the narrative processing effort – although here it is generated by an atmosphere in which all characters provide alternative versions of events, and the narrative prioritises none. Thus Sonja's paranoia extends also to the spectator who again is unable to grasp a trustworthy notion of the external world and its events – not because of some meta-physical dilemma, but because the mediations involved are too vulnerable to the lies and manipulations of those in power.

blurring the lines between characters' 'performance' and their true identity. From the outset there is confusion over the identity of the old man in the asylum for instance – he is referred to as Rade Marković by the nurses in the hospital, only to insist that he be called Nebojša instead. In other words he is either the real 'self' of the actor, or the identity of one of his previous roles (Nebojša), and yet neither seems to correspond with the additional exposition Petrović gives us about the character (that he worked for the Party in eliminating political enemies), thereby creating a complex layering of identity, which makes it rather impossible to demarcate theatrical performance, fantasy, and memory from social identity.

So, just as the audience's gaze is constantly de-centred by Petrović's distancing techniques, never allowed to settle in one particular ideological mode, so too the identity of those we see on screen is never constructed so simply as to allow us to maintain a clear distinction between reality and fantasy (as is commonplace in most fictional narrative productions for example, where it is very rare for an actor to play the role of a character who shared certain uncanny similarities with him – such as name or personal details etc.). Once again, this is why the fantasy of the mad subject (Boris) takes on the form it does, operating around a series of oppositional constructions of identity, in which there is always one public and one private face, for everybody (shop owner/pimp, student/prostitute, director/killer etc.). The simplicity of how such identities operate within Boris's fantasy functions both as a mocking, and an homage, of the crudeness of classical narrative filmmaking in its approach to diegetic reality – wherein only a binaristic duality can be permitted (it must be either pure fantasy or pure reality... etc.). Petrović rejects the option of such an approach to constructing filmic reality, instead opting for a far more unknowable universe, in which the boundaries between screen space and off-screen space, and screen identity and off-screen identity, are thoroughly uncertain. The same raw elements feature in almost every narrative 'plane' – so for example Petrović as director is a known para-textual feature of the film – however he also features within the film in the underground shelter/asylum as a minor character and is then also incorporated into Boris's fantasy as a hired killer, who also has a hobby making films. Another example is the signifier of a monkey, present in the film through Boris's constant allusions to *Stalker* (Tarkovsky, 1979); his description of 'patriotic' clips which he used to make for the state TV channel (which featured monkeys jumping barbed wire fences) and also in the form of another inmate who behaves as if a monkey in the asylum. More monkeys are evident in the park

statue around which characters gather in Boris's Rorschach fantasy and in Djordje's bizarre story about an encounter with a monkey after a night out with friends – in which he first suspects it to be a figment of his stoned imagination before learning the next day that it was an escapee from a local zoo. This is the fundamental challenge for the *LTLF* spectator – to cognitively process these various narrative threads despite their bizarre incongruities and the fact that similar elements re-occur constantly in both a character's immediate physical reality, their mediated experience of the world through film and TV and their roaming imaginations. When there is simply too much to process that rational and simplistic 'cause-and-effect' explanations are unable to fill all the gaps, the spectator has reached the multiple realities state of mind inhabited by Boris.

Unlike the fleeting identification with similarly challenged and traumatised protagonists of *Fuse* or *Loving Glances*, in *LTLF* there is no respite from this narrative impasse throughout the film. Whereas the other films in question quickly counterbalance the disturbance of the multiple realities trope by demarcating a clear hierarchy between subjective and objective on-screen realities, *LTLF* offers only endless refractions of subjective and ideologically tainted windows to the truth of late 1990s Serbia during the NATO conflict. Thus, the experience of the *LTLF* spectator is ever more that of a hallucination, the reality which one cannot make sense of, in which knowledge becomes unattainable, and thus one in which life is felt as some unreal fiction. This of course, is a rather curious inversion of a more common cinematic dynamic in which fiction is felt (momentarily) to be life. The subject of the multiple realities trope in *LTLF* is as much the spectator of the film as its protagonist – and it is this which makes Petrović's film so noteworthy as a novel response to the traumatic period of Yugoslav break-up.

6.2.4. Power, aesthetics, and dissent: Petrović as Black Wave practitioner?

Having discussed some of the film's aesthetic and formal components in the previous three sections of the chapter, I intend now to use this final section to consider Petrović's style in a more holistic sense, relating it to cinematic and media discourse of the period – especially other texts which take the bombing as thematic focus (but which do not utilise madness for instance). Since *LTLF* is a film which in itself comprises a number of internal discourses – each with differing relationships between subject and object, reality and image, audience and text, etc., it would be fruitful to examine the implications of its

internal interplay of different registers and modes, for the wider discourse within which it arose.

First of all, it is worth noting the approach adopted by various other cinematic texts of the 1999 bombing. Films such as *Sky Hook* (Samardžić, 1999) and *Wounded Country* (Lazić, 1999) both utilise fairly standard narratives (temporal linearity and forward progression, unity of fictive space, etc.) which focus on a range of characters (a social cross-section so to speak) living during the bombing. In *Sky Hook* for example, a local neighbourhood comes together in order to re-build their local basketball court which has been destroyed during the ongoing bombing as an assertion of their identity (they are inspired by nostalgic memories of successful Yugoslav basketball teams from the past) and their humanity (in doing so they learn once more to work together, families stop arguing, petty rivalries are set aside and so on). The bombing features only in terms of exposition, both in dialogue (passing reference is made to 'them crashing down') and set design (rubble fills the background of each frame). It functions like some ever-present misfortune which the residents stoically accept and survive by drinking alcohol and occupying themselves with neighbourhood romances. Clearly the strategies for coping with the bombing which are here celebrated are exactly the component which has attracted the accusations from critics of the film being blatant pro-Milošević propaganda in celebrating a silent endurance of present conditions rather apportioning blame to those in power (as did nonetheless eventually happen successfully in October of 2000 when Milošević was finally deposed from office by popular protest). However, compared to a film like *Wounded Country*, one might consider *Sky Hook* to be fairly balanced. The former is a film in which the bombing of Serbia is referred to as 'genocide' by one of the young and beautiful characters hiding in a bomb shelter (mirroring the official Milošević line), while a university professor is shown to be foolish in his pathetic insistence that it would have been better to have moved abroad when 'all this began'. Meanwhile every bomb seems to strike an isolated child or pensioner, in which the campaign is actively attacked as a purposeful attempt to murder civilians. Clearly, this is a step further in the pro-Milošević propaganda stakes than *Sky Hook*. Ultimately, it is clear that such films sought to use the device of a simplistic narrative as a means by which to shape opinion of the bombing either as something to be accepted and overcome (as a test of individual and collective spirit) or an act of senseless murder committed by malevolent sub-human entities. *LTLF* is therefore interesting in its efforts to

avoid approaching narrative as a device for defining a particular response from the viewer. Instead it strives to offer us a genuine sense of what defines living through such an experience, while attempting to remain alert to the complexities of the political situation which surrounded the events.

The film instead has much more in common with films made during the early part of Makavejev's career, such as *Innocence Unprotected* (1968) and *WR: Mysteries of the Organism* (1971), both in terms of formal approaches (use of compilation film, distancing and self-referentiality) and social practice (film as a forum for a free and critical engagement with official ideologies). Petrović's utilisation of such inter-textual factors thereby also opened up the question of the relevance of the Black Wave tradition in the contemporary late-Milošević period of 1999-2000. If, as some scholars have argued, a key mode for framing understanding of the Kosovo crisis and events of 1999 was through a 'metaphor war' drawing on Vietnam, Munich and the Holocaust (Paris, 2002), then Petrović opens up a further historical comparison – of Milošević's regime with the Yugoslav one of the late 1960's and early 1970s, which became increasingly repressive in its censorship of arts and culture (eventually either jailing or, more frequently, forcing abroad many of the leading Black Wave directors). In doing so, Petrović also stages a dialogue between different aspects of Yugoslav cinematographic history (if one considers not only this Black Wave engagement but also the post-war genre films such as *The Magic Sword*), using these inter-textual allusions to open up a consideration of precisely how film, media, and visual culture ultimately relates to the political, social and cultural life of a society in general – and the post-Yugoslav Serbian one in particular.

Indeed Petrović's film is as much about the traumas of 1999 as it is a self-reflexive experiment with various cinematic conventions and traditions – skilfully interwoven into a film which repays repeated viewing and yet never settles upon a fixed or ultimate consolidation of its multiple realities which so challenge some of the fundamental expectations of the spectator. Whether referencing both Hollywood and European 'art' cinema traditions with visual cues or in characters' discussions about the topic of film – or, more systematically, in the interplay of differing narrative conventions (the classical approach of Boris's localised Hollywood fiction which functions as a mise-en-abyme in his Rorschach fantasy or the open-ended and ambiguous nature of *LTLF* taken as a compilation of numerous overlapping narratives) – Petrović offers likewise an appraisal of the various

techniques and approaches available to him, finding in this self-reflexive synthesis an innovative and original approach to adapting the common and elsewhere somewhat simple multiple realities trope of madness in the post-Yugoslav context. In a sense, Petrović goes further than the directors of the films discussed in the previous chapter, incorporating into the challenge presented by trauma for knowledge also an array of endlessly mediated perspectives, with varying ideological dimensions, which accumulate such overlaps and inconsistencies to ultimately render the traumatic moment a sort of irresolvable ‘black hole’ around which this overwhelming *excess* of various memories, images, and discourses circulate – each time seemingly yielding something tantalisingly new and yet never ultimately dissolving to reveal what lies beneath.

6.3. Conclusions

LTLF represents a complex attempt to approach the history and experience of the 1999 NATO bombing. It differs from much of the contemporary cinematic discourse on the subject, which offered only a passing engagement with the bombing using narrative exposition (often in a propagandistic manner), by way of its attempt to translate the experience of trauma into one created as cinematic effect with the aid of various techniques and devices. In doing so, the film extends the trope of madness within to include a metaphorical challenge to the viewer's own demarcation of reality and fiction, which ultimately renders the experience of conflict as a hallucination, a fiction within reality which resists logics of cause-and-effect understandings. Consequently it might be possible to state that *LTLF* adopts a fundamentally different approach to the subject of the traumas of this conflict. Unlike some of the other films mentioned above which sought to clearly position the bombing within specific frameworks of knowledge (often in politically motivated manner), *LTLF* offers instead a viewing experience that, without underestimating the complexity of such traumatic experience, nonetheless attempts to re-create something of its confusing unknowability. The attempt to understand such violence is taken up in various strands of the film's brief seventy-minute runtime but, ultimately, each yields only partial truths, further uncertainty or even, in the case of Boris's final salute to the audience, an emphatic rejection of the simplistic notion that somehow we might at some (end) point learn what it all means.

It is in this resistance to objective truths and openness to a reality characterised by often contradictory and confusing images and events that *LTLF* reveals its reliance on madness as dynamic within the viewing process. Thus it is not simply the case that, as in some of the films discussed in the previous chapter, we have here a protagonist whom others in the film refer to as mad, by way of indicating that a traumatic experience now leaves him as a malfunctioning subject who lives in ‘his own world’. This is only part of the much more varied picture of the film, wherein Petrović also exploits certain components of the madman’s relation to reality as a way of representing the unrepresentable experience of trauma. Petrović, educated in the various global traditions of cinema and attendant film theory (later employed as a university film lecturer in Belgrade) offers a complex example of what Wollen (1969) would have termed ‘counter-cinema’ in which estrangement – as a form of deliberate disruption of the seamlessness of a spectator’s identification with the text – is a definitive feature.¹⁰⁸ This recourse to the narrative conventions of European ‘art’ cinema, characterised by Bordwell (1985) as one whereby narrative focuses upon the limits of character knowledge and in which ‘the viewer must therefore tolerate more permanent causal gaps than would be normal in classical film’ (1985: 200), is unsurprising since it is within such a structure that the definitive components of trauma (its ultimate unknowability) can best be accommodated. By virtue of Petrović’s experimentation with narrative structure he fundamentally rejects the notion of a closed, completed and unitary past and chooses not to offer a sense of historical event (here the NATO bombing) as a linear, comprehensible narrative with a beginning, middle and end – thus rendering his work a supreme example of Rosenstone’s notion of ‘innovative drama’ on a historical topic. Instead the representation of this significant period of the post-Yugoslav transition, the 1999 NATO bombing, is utterly mediated through the subjective filters of trauma – here established using a multiple realities trope of madness that is the single most effective and innovative cinematic simulation of the cognitive overload/malfunction effected by trauma which can be found in the film culture of the period. Ultimately therefore Petrović’s *LTLF* represents a text which seeks to question exactly *how* such post-Yugoslav Serbian film culture might continue to articulate both its pasts and presents in the wake of events of the 1990s. In addressing both the events and experiences of 1999 and the challenges to cultural and cinematic ways of engaging with

¹⁰⁸ See Stam et al. (1992: 198-200) for more on these theoretical parallels between Russian Formalism, Bertolt Brecht and Peter Wollen’s writing on avant-garde film.

them, *LTLF* thus represents one of the most artistically ambitious and innovative responses to the entire Yugoslav break-up.

This chapter therefore concludes the second of the film analysis sections. It has focused on providing a close reading of a more experimental title to complement the discussion of three other films in chapter 5 – all of which also fundamentally employ madness as a breakdown of the knowledge-production process, caused by traumatic experience. However, the key difference across the films analysed across chapters 5 and 6 is the degree to which narrative and aesthetic choices are made which extend this cognitive uncertainty also to the audience. Overall, this second thesis section has illustrated an alternative – but nonetheless related – cultural use of madness to that discussed in section one (chapters 3 and 4). Whereas the earlier analysis section focused on how madness can be employed as a form of ideological demobilisation (essentially an ‘undoing’ of attitudes and values which had become naturalised by prevailing ideologies), here too in the second analysis section the focus is on a certain challenge to logic, reasoning and knowledge: only this time working as a metaphor for the post-traumatic attempt to understand and move beyond experiences of shock and loss. In both cases what is crucial is a conception of madness as a transgression of the limits of pre-existing sense, knowledge and coherent rational thinking. In the films discussed in chapters 3 and 4, this transgression becomes a way to temper the unwitting power of harmful but dominant ideological principles across three post-Yugoslav transition societies. In chapters 5 and 6, we see instead that this transgression beyond the limits of what seems to make sense and be comprehensible becomes useful also as a means by which to conceptualise that which lies at the core of traumatic experience.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

The purpose of this chapter is to re-visit the core thesis research question and primary objectives raised in chapter 1 in light of the film analyses in chapters 3-7, thereby identifying the various conclusions and contributions of the study. I begin with a summary of the findings relative to the core research objective, before moving onto the four primary research questions.

7.1. Re-visiting the core research objective

The main research objective for the thesis was to **consider how madness has been used in post-Yugoslav cinemas to provide ways of thinking about experiences of the break-up of Yugoslavia and its consequences.**

Madness has provided post-Yugoslav film cultures with a series of essential metaphors for thinking through the turmoil and traumas of the protracted Yugoslav break-up with images of asylums and individuals suffering from malfunctions and disturbances in their thinking prominent in numerous post-Yugoslav cinemas across a number of films. Using a semantic/syntactic approach to characterise underlying patterns in how madness is used in these films revealed two broader trope types: what I have termed ‘the inside-out asylum’ and ‘the multiple realities’ tropes of madness. The films were then organised into two separate thesis sections, one for each trope in question, and the film analysis focused on a deeper exploration of how these tropes of madness worked on a textual level to engage contemporary contexts of post-Yugoslav break-up and transition and the evident core themes of trauma and identity found therein.

The first thesis section showed that in films featuring the inside-out asylum trope, a recurrent feature was the breakdown of the spatial boundary delimiting the asylum and a narrative which subsequently staged interaction between the asylum’s former patients or inmates and the inhabitants of the world around them. Hereafter a series of awkward performances of various social practices, associated with the enacting of dominant political ideologies, ensued – to which the ‘othering’ potential of madness was essential in effecting a process of defamiliarisation with ideas, gestures, words and symbols whose ideological significance had become increasingly naturalised in contemporary political discourses. We

can therefore think about the inside-out asylum trope of madness in terms of an ‘ideological demobilisation’. This ideological demobilisation represents an attempt to disarm the potent ideological discourses which contained an inherent potential for generating social division and disharmony, at the very same time as offering the inverse of these values as a discursive value and goal. In all three of the cases analysed in chapters 3 and 4 the ideologies in question are ones revealed as having strongly hegemonistic undertones – despite seemingly masquerading under the banner of unity and a promise of a better future for citizens of the successor states. Moreover, these ideological critiques are crucially *introspective* ones in which film cultures can be seen to scrutinise the motives and hypocrisies of domestic elites – rather than simply turning attention to external ideologies associated with ethno-national others.

In essence therefore, we have seen a Serbian film being highly critical of nationalism and militarism in a domestic context (quite contrary to the tenets of Milošević’s official discourses); a Kosovan film which initially criticizes Serbian authority over the province – before turning the majority of its attention to the hegemonistic undertones of the domestic Kosovan nationalism; and, finally, a Croatian film in which both Yugoslavism/socialism and Croatian nationalism/capitalism are treated with suspicion for their susceptibility to abuse by opportunists seeking personal power and profit. The overall trend is certainly therefore one of mistrust and suspicion when it comes to idealistic ideologies that promise a brighter future for domestic populations, but in practice seemingly only increase division and distrust in the present. In this sense, we can conclude that ideological demobilisation represents a crucial objective of these post-Yugoslav film cultures, here facilitated by tropes of madness that recur across multiple successor states. Varying levels of optimism for the ultimate success of achieving this essential ideological demobilisation were however found across the different films discussed in the film analysis. The inside-out asylum trope is therefore, in the final analysis, a means of thinking through the ideological flux of post-Yugoslav transition and an attempt to temper the components of potentially divisive ideologies arising in the midst of these years.

The second thesis section focused on the ‘multiple realities’ trope of madness in which a key feature is the disruption of diegetic integrity in a manner which depicts the subjective experience of trauma as experienced by characters within the film. Just like the breakdown of the asylum in section 1, so too here the events setting such processes in

motion are always related to those of Yugoslav break-up and attendant transitions. Here madness is used as a failed knowledge process in which the traumatised subject encounters fundamental challenges in processing the events of the period and instead finds that the imaginary works to repair traumatic loss. Different examples of the trope evident in chapters 5 and 6 differ in terms of how much assistance is provided for the audience in distinguishing between subjective and objective realities, and how long the audience is held in a position of uncertainty between the two. In all cases however, the trope is essential to how trauma is conceptualised and articulated within the audio-visual narrative medium, functioning usually to warn of the dangers of leaving traumatic experience unaddressed in the rush of post-Yugoslav nation-building.

7.2. Re-visiting the thesis questions

In this section I will summarise the findings of each chapter relative to the four main research questions listed for the study in Chapter 1.

7.2.1. Question 1: How are tropes of madness constructed in post-Yugoslav cinemas through narrative and audio-visual aesthetics?

Two major tropes have been analysed in the two thesis sections, with each section also distinguishing between subtle variations on the general trope across the different chapters. Section 1, comprising chapters 3 and 4, outlines the characteristics of the ‘inside-out asylum trope of madness’ in which the core underlying feature is the use of an asylum setting which is at some point abandoned by its patient(s) or inmates. The reason for the breakdown of this boundary is always provided in some way by events of Yugoslav break-up, whether international sanctions applied to Serbia in the early 1990s in *Burlesque Tragedy*, the change in political authority over Kosovo in 1999 in *Kukumi* or the confusion provoked by the vision of Tito in *Marshall Tito's Spirit* which makes apprehending the escaped madman a difficult and ineffective endeavour. This therefore represents the most important aspect of how the inside-out asylum trope works at a narrative and audio-visual level in that, unlike in many other notable films using an asylum setting also discussed in the chapter 3 introduction, in post-Yugoslav cinemas the asylum setting represents a vital counterpoint to the surrounding society in which most of the action unfolds.

Thus the inside-out asylum trope essentially combines with other common narrative structures which provide the means to examine the values which characterise or even

sustain a particular community. In the case of *Kukumi* and *Burlesque Tragedy*, because the escaped patients function as the narrative focalisers we have a loose road movie structure in which the outsiders (travellers/patients) encounter the insiders (the social collective), typically producing a much darker tone for these films. On the other hand, in *Marshall Tito's Spirit*, the narrative focalisers are taken from community/social collective itself so that instead we have the plot motif wherein an unusual visitor(s) prompts an introspective examination of the community itself. The transfer from inside to outside the asylum is however more than a mere spatial transition. Instead, facilitated by a *breakdown* of the boundary separating the two, the inside-out asylum trope thereby involves an inversion of ideological co-ordinates. This process of inversion is derived from the 'othering' and uncanny potential of madness when brought into contact with cultural practices, social rituals, speech, images and gestures naturalised in the outside society.

Chapter 3 outlines how this process of self-examination is structured by the use of the escaped patients for the purpose of defamiliarising or estranging common cultural (*Burlesque Tragedy*) or political (*Marshall Tito's Spirit*) reference points in post Yugoslav societies by combination of naturalised social practices enacted awkwardly by the escaped patients and those that come into contact with them. Chapter 4 meanwhile examines specifically the way the inside-out asylum trope combines with road movie motifs in *Kukumi* for providing a narrative structure in which encounters between insiders/outsideers (defined along lines of national self/other by various visual motifs in the film) likewise provide a means for a critical re-examination of dominant ideologies of nation in the post-Yugoslav Kosovan context.

Section 2, comprising chapters 5 and 6, moves onto the 'multiple realities trope of madness' in which the defining characteristic is the manipulation of the integrity of diegetic reality as a means for conceptualising the experience of civilian traumas arising from various forms of loss engendered by experiences of the 1990s. Such films typically feature civilians who are either individually caught up in the experience of conflict or otherwise who suffer by virtue of living in its aftermath. These characters often function as protagonists in the titles in question and extensive screen time is devoted to conceptualising the mental experiences of their trauma. In all cases a secondary diegetic reality is introduced within the world of the film corresponding to the experience of the world as lived by the traumatised civilians in question. However, the particulars of these 'multiple

realities' vary across more mainstream titles (with larger budgets and extensive domestic and perhaps even international theatrical releases in mind) and the more experimental avant-garde work of one particular filmmaker, Milutin Petrović's self-funded and DIY projects.

Chapter 5 therefore focuses on a more conventional approach to rendering the affective experience of trauma on screen as seen in *Fuse*, *Mirage*, and *Loving Glances*. In these films there is an early rupture in diegetic integrity introduced by the sudden appearance of characters in the frame whose presence seems to disrupt the realism of the scene (either by the suddenness of their arrival, some element of their use regarding *mise-en-scene*, such as costume or posture within the frame, or simply because their presence contradicts information already provided to the spectator). In these mainstream titles however this rupture is soon repaired by the point-of-view shots of additional characters which confirm that the confusing realism-disrupting presence of these characters in fact arises from the internal state of the traumatised protagonists: they are not indeed visible to any other character inhabiting the same diegetic level as the traumatised protagonist. In other words, after presenting a momentary challenge for the audience by way of destabilising the integrity of diegetic reality, these films then quickly repair this uncertainty and thereafter structure the traumatic subjective reality of the traumatised protagonist as a secondary one within the wider objective reality experienced by other protagonists.

Chapter 6 on the other hand looks at *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* in which the layering of 'multiple realities' is far more complex and confusing for the spectator. Again there is a loose format involving the subjective experience of the traumatised subject and a more objective reality experienced by those around him – although here the demarcations are far less clear. In addition there are additional planes of reality introduced by multiple forms of media into the filmic composition meaning that ultimately; a neat ordering of objective external reality versus a subjective internal one arising from trauma becomes impossible as the number of effects destabilising the integrity of each 'plane' of diegetic reality, and blurring it with others, becomes ever greater.

7.2.2. Question 2: How do these tropes function in terms of articulating themes of trauma and identity in the post-Yugoslav cultural context?

In terms of how the two tropes of madness discussed in the thesis create meanings around the core themes of trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cultures, there are a number of key points arising from the analysis.

The first trope discussed, the inside-out asylum trope is typically much more relevant to thematic explorations of identity in a post-Yugoslav context. As mentioned above, the trope typically structures contact between insiders/outsideers of the social collective (often flagged in various ways as standing for the national one) which enable a critical examination of core values as evidenced by the encounters between self/other provided in the films. The examples discussed across the analysis chapters provide evidence of how these encounters between self/other ultimately serve to engage various dominant political discourses either by virtue of their slogans and images (in *Marshall Tito's Spirit*) or the cultural practices they give rise to (in *Burlesque Tragedy* for example).

Chapter 3 outlines how in *Burlesque Tragedy*, the 'othering' potential of the escaped patients is brought to bear upon various cultural practices which in the climate of early 1990s conflict in Serbia had taken on an excessive ideological dimension by virtue of association with Slobodan Milošević's nationalist-militarist discourses. Likewise, in *Marshall Tito's Spirit*, the same 'othering' potential of madness is transferred from the escaped patient to the entire community around him. In similar fashion, social and cultural practices with a significant ideological dimension (here related to Titoist discourses of Yugoslavism and self-management socialism) are enacted in precisely a manner that encourages estrangement and dissociation. Chapter 4 examined the manner in which this 'othering' potential is applied to practices of emergent Kosovan national identity in *Kukumi* in the wake of Serb withdrawal from the province in 1999. In the three cases above, the inside-out asylum trope facilitates a critical re-assessment of dominant national ideologies which are deemed to have potential for establishing divisive and dangerous notions of self/other and which threaten social harmony, despite seeming to paradoxically offer it as a goal and objective in the post-Yugoslav transition context.

The second trope discussed in the thesis, the multiple-realities trope, is far more concerned thematically with legacies of trauma than identity in a direct sense, although often the implications of traumatic experience for post-Yugoslav identities moving forward is raised. These films conceptualise trauma as the inhabiting of a present-day external reality in which some extreme loss – linked to Yugoslav break-up – is felt, and which the

imaginary then works to repair. In Chapter 5 this loss is in turn the loss of loved ones due to death in conflict (*Fuse*), the loss of loved ones due to displacement (*Loving Glances*), or the loss of a functional social collective capable of integrating its members, ultimately resulting in a barbaric and viscous social existence (*Mirage*). In chapter 6, in *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom*, this loss is essentially one relating to perceptual stability and the comfort of inhabiting a knowable and logical social and physical space. In most cases the prospects for those living with trauma are shown to be extremely limited, with only the comic *Loving Glances* offering love as a feasible remedy for the crippling consequences of this loss. However, the other films variously posit PTSD as a crippling experience from which recovery would require a remedy of external realities – to an extent which was, within the films in question, beyond realistic possibility. The challenges presented by trauma are structured not only as ones faced by the individual but also, ultimately, as ones having huge bearing upon the community's chances for success in moving beyond the legacies of conflict.

7.2.3. Question 3: How does analysis of tropes of madness facilitate a comparative consideration across the post-Yugoslav cinemas and what does it add to understandings of how cultures in individual successor states processed experiences of the period?

The seven films analysed in chapters 3-7 are variously produced in the post-Yugoslav successor republics of Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and then UN protectorate of Kosovo. Most were produced within some co-production arrangement either with a regional or international partner and many had international as well as domestic theatrical releases. It is clear that none of the films are 'pure' on an industrial level with regard to their national industrial provenance. However, on a textual and thematic level, they are far clearer in terms of their national concerns – often establishing a specific setting of national significance for the successor republic within which the film is set. In other words, while we cannot easily attribute these films to being of only one national/industrial provenance – there is usually nonetheless a major national industrial partner and then more minor ones, which does justify considering *Kukumi* a Kosovan film for example (even though the Croatian company Jadran Film was a minority production partner). Secondly, and more importantly, thematically a film like *Kukumi* is certainly Kosovan. It is on this basis that the following conclusions are drawn.

Firstly, the similarities across the films – stressed inherently by the thesis structure – should be once more re-iterated. Both types of madness trope discussed here can be found variously in multiple cinemas of the post-Yugoslav successor states. Perhaps the only notable absence is Slovenia – Montenegro on the other hand has an almost non-existent industry so it would be foolish to read too much into the absence of Montegrin films from the study. Slovenia on the other hand does have a notable output of a handful of films per year (roughly commensurate and even exceeding that of other small states of 2 million inhabitants). Although, very much concerned with the theme of identity, Slovenian cinema has been far less focused on themes of trauma than other post-Yugoslav cinemas and indeed perhaps one reason for the lack of tropes of madness therein can be explained by the fact that such tropes are typically concerned with social, political and individual crisis of various kinds. Since the Slovenian experience of both conflict and transition in the post-Yugoslav context was far more painless than that of the other successor states (only a 9 day war of secession, rapid integration into the EU and a significant rise in living standards) it could be argued that this factor maybe accounts for the lack of tropes of madness in post-Yugoslav Slovenian cinemas.

Turning away from the question of absence, it is worth also summarising what conclusions can be drawn from the tropes of madness which were evident in Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Macedonian and Kosovan cinemas. Regarding the inside-out asylum trope and the films of ‘ideological demobilisation’ it is notable that Croatia’s *Marshall Tito’s Spirit* was ultimately comic in tone and posited a viable solution to the problem represented by the asylum patient, ultimately asserting that the community is capable of overcoming the grip of powerful but potentially harmful ideologies (either those of the communist past or those imposed by the advent of neo-liberalism in the transition context) – and that a new social harmony can be built only once the discourses which support such ideologies have been debunked. On the other hand, the Serbian *Burlesque Tragedy* and the Kosovan *Kukumi* offer far bleaker prospects for the chances of overcoming the grip of divisive ideologies and building a social harmony in their absence. This arguably speaks much of the contexts within which the films were made and the assessment of prospects within that historic-cultural moment in each successor republic. Indeed perhaps it is not surprising that in films made in war-time Serbia in 1994 and highly divided Kosovo circa 2004, the mood was one in which little optimism could be found for ever moving beyond

the ideologies which were perceived by filmmakers and artists to perpetuate the status quo. Nonetheless, perhaps the more important point is that, although differing in terms of prospects for the future, these films all posit excessive investment in disingenuously deployed ideology as a danger which has the capacity to critically destabilise a society. Rather than offering a rhetorically complex ideological alternative however, the antidote to such dangers is structured as a simple humanistic dedication to seeing differences in the social collective – without necessarily seeing ‘others’ of various kinds. Part of this challenge involves a certain maturity to recognise when those with power seek to instrumentally exploit naivety with their own ideological goals in mind.

In terms of trauma, once again there is a strong trend within all films apart from one that the traumatic legacies of Yugoslav break-up and conflict will present considerable challenges for years to come, and will actively derail future nation-building prospects unless adequately dealt with – a perspective evident in particular in the Bosnian *Fuse* and the Macedonian *Mirage*. Indeed only the Serbian production of *Loving Glances* offers much hope for the traumatised civilian, and here it should be noted that the trauma essentially pertains to displacement from loved ones – which is then remedied with the forging of new social connections, unlike in the other films which deal with more difficult experiences such as death of loved ones in conflict (*Fuse*) or the formative consequences for younger generations of growing up in an environment of social conflict and hardship (*Mirage*).

Ultimately therefore, this text-based analysis concludes that considering post-Yugoslav cinemas within a comparative framework is a viable analytical approach not because of industrial overlaps (which are nonetheless evident) but primarily because of thematic and stylistic aspects which offer perspectives on the same core concerns around experiences of the break-up. While the case for considering such cinemas independently will grow ever stronger with each passing year, my contention is that when it comes to the films of Yugoslav break-up and its more immediate consequences, a comparative post-Yugoslav framework is ideally suited both for making sense of cinematic phenomena (some of which, like the recurrence of tropes of madness, only really become evident with such a framework) and ultimately for answering the questions of how film cultures have responded to this significant historical period. It should also be noted that for the majority of above-the-line personnel involved in the productions analysed here, the break-up of

Yugoslavia had a profoundly formative and influential impact on subsequent thematic interests and ideological perspectives. Indeed, almost all of the directors whose work is included in this thesis spent at least part of the 1990s working directly on documentary films about some aspect of the break-up and conflicts (this includes both the younger directors Žalica, Brešan, Ristovski, and Petrović – for whom this documentary period was an apprenticeship of sorts – and also older more established directors such as Marković and Karanović, who found documentary a more practical and immediate form in which to work during the conflicts). For this cultural elite, whether educated during the earlier Yugoslav period or the turmoil of the 1990s, there is an evidently shared motivation to expose the ugliness and catastrophic legacies of inter-ethnic hatred, division and violence – as well as a concern with uncovering the myth that, once the ethnic other is banished, social harmony will automatically ensue in the successor societies. It is this shared ideological perspective on the lessons to be drawn from the various post-Yugoslav transitions which further justifies, in my opinion, a comparative analytical framework which incorporates films from multiple successor states.

Likewise, setting the films in a wider regional and historical context reveals a number of conclusions with implications for future study. Firstly, comparing these post-Yugoslav titles with recent films from neighbouring Romania for example indicates that assessing the meanings and implications of the turbulent times of the late 1980s and early 1990s remains a pressing cultural concern. Differing aesthetic and ideological positions on these momentous events – as well as differing audience responses to them – is a fertile ground for drawing conclusions towards explaining the social, political, and cultural function of films such as *Marshall Tito's Spirit* or Romanian titles such as *12:08 East of Bucharest* (Poromboiu, 2006), *The Paper will be Blue* (Muntean, 2006) or *Tales from the Golden Age* (Mungiu et al, 2009). A comparative approach encompassing multiple national cinemas is therefore still a viable methodological choice as long as these thematic overlaps continue to persist. Nonetheless, notable differences are in evidence across the wider post-socialist sphere in terms of how the traumas of the period as represented – with the most obvious being that the Yugoslav case has spawned far more images of the break-up itself than seen elsewhere.

7.2.4. Question 4: How can this case study contribute to literature on cultural uses and representations of madness more generally?

As outlined in Chapter 1, most studies of madness on screen focus on the issue of how mental illness is represented with a view to remedying ignorance or misinformation about illnesses around which a considerable degree of fear and stigma persists. This study has shown however that in some cases images of asylums or mental malfunctioning and disturbance needn't necessarily be assumed to be primarily thematically concerned with mental illness, but that mental illness (and indeed, now outdated conceptions of it, encompassing various forms of disability, difference, illness etc.) can also be employed in a metaphoric capacity – as a trope – in order to create meanings around a range of other themes. While this usage might also have a secondary impact in terms of affecting how those who suffer mental health problems are perceived in a modern day context, the focus of this study has instead been on the more primary usage of the trope – as a means of understanding and thinking about post-Yugoslav break-up and transition.

The thesis therefore provides a case study which indicates that, as with aforementioned examples from other global cinemas at differing periods throughout the 20th century, madness continues to be a powerful and compelling means for filmmakers to allegorise various forms of crisis. In particular, the examples from this thesis indicate how varying conceptions of madness can be employed to dramatise processes of ideological flux in times of social crisis through the use of the asylum and the interaction between the patients escaping from it and the society around them. Likewise, in the second thesis section, the four examples discussed indicate how conceptions of madness as perceptual instability are both inherently suited to the audio-visual narrative medium, where perceptual instability is an effect easily re-created for audiences, but also how this effect can be adapted to conceive of the effects of trauma and loss for individuals.

In the tropes discussed in the thesis madness functions firstly, in the inside-out asylum trope, as a mobile boundary between self/other which is discursively maintained in various dominant ideological discourses. The breakdown of the asylum discussed in chapters 3 and 4 is ultimately an allegory for the demise of the previous social, political, and ideological structure and the certainties that its stability provided (even if they were not always desirable or positive ones). The breakdown of the asylum dramatizes a critical point at which a powerful and dominant ideology breaks down amidst the crises of transition. This allegorical usage of the failing asylum is evident in the three films discussed here and then facilitates a critical examination of ideologies in flux through the patients'/inmates'

subsequent encounters with the society outside. Here madness is ultimately used as a means of ‘othering’ that which has been discursively naturalised in post-Yugoslav transition societies, providing a valuable means of thinking against and across the powerful pull of dominant ideologies of Milošević’s nationalism, Titoist self-management socialism, and Kosovan nation-building. However, this potential for madness to be used as a metaphor highlighting the flawed value systems of a society is one surely broader than the post-Yugoslav context – which should be evident across various literary or cinematic cultures. More generally, what is at stake is a device for questioning prevailing wisdom, wherein that which is repressed or unworthy actually provides a telling insight that reveals deficiencies in madness’s opposite – sanity, or, the commonly accepted values and principles governing ‘normal’ thought and behaviour in a society. In this sense, the ‘regressive’ image of asylums found in these cinematic tropes is perhaps not so much employed because of outdated ideas around mental illness being prominent in such cultures (although this is also possible) – but is rather used as a potent reminder that common and widely accepted attitudes are not necessarily empirically correct, morally desirable, socially useful, or even, ultimately, incapable of change.

The ‘multiple realities’ trope of madness discussed in the second thesis section is somewhat different in that the focus is to a greater extent on how the experiences of the period affect the individual first and foremost, with the social consequences of such being implied in subplots rather than taking centre stage. In these films the imaginary works to repair the traumatic ruptures effected by loss in the post-Yugoslav present. In the light-hearted *Loving Glances*, the protagonist is aware of the illusory nature of these figments of his imagination, while in *Mirage* and *Fuse*, the protagonists suffering from PTSD are shown to be increasingly isolated and forgotten due to the many other imperatives of post-Yugoslav transitions. This failure to acknowledge and address traumatic experience is ultimately shown to represent a disastrous outcome which only contributes to the mental distress of the sufferers, ultimately costing the surrounding society far more in the long run. Again however the understanding of madness is one which I would expect can be found in various other film cultures dealing with themes of trauma. Here the trope of madness is one which relies on experimentation with the film’s aesthetic and narrative construction so as to establish an interpretative challenge for the audience – in which it becomes difficult to retain the sense of an objective, unquestionable, master narrative. Madness is therefore

essential here as a metaphor for the challenge presented to the subject in the attempt to produce knowledge and understanding of the individual self through its experience of the world, particularly in the wake of traumatic experience. It is here also that madness's long affiliation with avant-garde artistic movements becomes relevant via the shared tendency to probe at the limits of sense and communication, exploring the points at which such efforts break-down and seeking to find something meaningful in such processes.

7.3. Contributions of the study

As outlined in the first thesis chapter, this work aims to contribute to presently available literature in three broad areas: (i) cultural studies of madness, (ii) post-Yugoslav cinema studies, (iii) understanding of trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cultures.

Firstly, on the question of cultural studies of madness, the thesis indicates that there is far more potential for using madness as a focal point of a cultural study beyond simply looking at representations of mental illness. While we might wish that all images of mental distress or asylums on our screens were informed by the very latest in medical knowledge on the topic, this is simply not the case. Numerous metaphoric usages (tropes) can be found in various cultural contexts which often employ notions of madness belonging in a different era – the continuing appeal of the screen asylum is one such example. These images can have a variety of meanings and feature in numerous genres and it is thus unnecessarily limiting to confine our studies of madness on screen to only looking at realistic depictions of specific mental illnesses. Asylums and mental disturbance can feature across almost any genre and be applied to a huge variety of local themes, often forming a crucial indicator of how those particular themes or issues are being understood in a society. The initial original contribution is therefore in the demonstration of an alternative, and transferable, method for approaching images of madness on screen that facilitates a much wider range of texts to be admitted – rather than only ones featuring realistic depictions of mental illness and participating in a discourse on what defines it.

Secondly, studies of post-Yugoslav cinemas have proliferated in the years during and immediately after the break-up, unsurprising in the context of the historical changes which occurred during this period and likewise the vast volume of images generated, providing a huge and diverse cultural corpus. However, aside from one or two more comprehensive studies of the films of the break-up, generally debates have focused on a

relatively small number of the most internationally high-profile, and often controversial, texts. While these texts do certainly merit the extensive attention they have received, this thesis argues that the study of post-Yugoslav cinemas of the break-up years is not completed by them, and that a more diverse picture emerges if attention is extended to other – less internationally successful – but nonetheless domestically significant titles. One of the challenges in achieving this is presented by the shortcomings in distribution endured by films of this period meaning that many are not even available on DVD even in their domestic countries of production. It is a fact that obtaining materials for the study of these post-Yugoslav cinemas requires skills in sourcing material via various unofficial distribution networks on the internet, whether simply using YouTube or similar streaming sites or even torrents. I believe however that this represents a worthy goal if the expansion of materials on which to base conclusion can be meaningfully increased. This thesis has therefore presented the first analytic literature in English on many of the notable productions featured in the study (*Fuse*, *Kukumi*, *Burlesque Tragedy*, *Loving Glances*, *Mirage*).

Thirdly and finally, in terms of trauma and identity in post-Yugoslav cultures, the thesis has shown that the range of cultural perspectives on these topics is more multifaceted than might be evident in current literature. For example, although largely ignored in many official and medical discourses around the experience of conflicts in some successor states, we can see that PTSD emerges in culture as a recurrent theme in texts which try to both build empathy and understanding with sufferers and also contemplate how the legacies of trauma might impact upon aspirations for the future of successor societies. Likewise, in the films of the inside-out asylum trope we can see examples of artistic texts adopting a subtle but prescient critical stance towards dominant political ideologies at a time when political pluralism was not yet established in each of the republics in question at the time (Serbia 1994, Croatia 1999, and Kosovo 2004). These critical perspectives ultimately amount to estranging that which had become discursively naturalised, opening up vital alternatives to the modes of thinking scrutinised in the films, powerfully suggesting that even the most political of changes (various ideological transitions in the successor states) become first possible in culture, before later becoming evident in more official public spheres. In the cases of post-Yugoslav societies in transition, visual culture – at the textual level – reveals a far more diverse and ideologically inconsistent picture of a society than found in various

official discourses. It would however be equally valuable to gain alternative – non text-based perspectives on the role of film during the break-up. Due to the chaos of film distribution arrangements during the period and the fact that they generally preceded widespread internet availability in former Yugoslavia, there has not been much work done either with or about audiences. Film viewers' qualitative responses to notable titles as well as reliable data on distribution channels and audience figures would all provide a more comprehensive picture of how the highly-active film cultures of the time related to the rapid and traumatic social upheavals.

Ultimately, images of dilapidated asylums and individuals suffering mental distress as they struggle to comprehend the losses of conflict and crisis are evident across all of the post-Yugoslav cinemas discussed in this thesis. Whether in processing the shocks of traumatic upheaval or in formulating new collective identities for the post-Yugoslav world, these images provide a startling index to the workings of culture as an essential space for thinking about the experience of crisis so inherent for those living through and in the wake of Yugoslav break-up. While cinema provides the medium for this essential cultural work, it is specifically the imagery of madness – so potent in evoking fear, uncertainty, distress, power and knowledge – that supplies the conceptual means for thinking through both the individual and social implications of the demise of the SFRY. What is most surprising across the films selected for this study is that a remarkable consensus emerges in terms of the perspectives on Yugoslav break-up and transition offered by these tropes of madness: firstly in expressing a fundamental distrust of political rhetoric and ideology which is held to blame for the failure of ethnic cohabitation symbolised by the bloody conflicts; and, secondly, in conceptualising the legacies of the period as a complete disarming of the subject's ability to make sense of its experience of the world – presenting any form of positive progression in the transition context with its greatest challenge. Perhaps most importantly, the positive goal towards which the various communities depicted on screen strive (or are condemned for not striving) is a social harmony which incorporates citizens of all kinds – including even the ethnic other. Although there is no nostalgia for the Yugoslav federal arrangement, the dream of the inclusive, multi-cultural, and fair society promised by Tito's Yugoslavism lives on in the culture of these post-Yugoslav films – as the only viable solution to the traumatic nightmare that this dream arguably produced in the 1990s. Throughout these titles, it is madness which provides the conceptual frameworks for this

assessment of Yugoslavia's traumatic demise and the process of picking through the debris of its ideology, cultural practices, values and ways of living for precisely what might be salvageable and what should be discarded.

Perhaps in future, as perceptions of different illnesses change, it will be otherwise but certainly during the bloody, confusing, and momentous ruptures represented by Yugoslav break-up, madness provided an almost inexhaustible range of metaphors and tropes for coming to terms with and understanding such experience. Separating them out and considering their various implications remains essential in the effort to untangle the legacies of Yugoslavia's much documented – but not yet wholly understood – demise. Although varying levels of optimism for the post-Yugoslav future can be found across the different titles discussed here, ultimately these, often unsettling, tropes of madness belie a uniquely progressive shared aspiration evident in successor states' cultures: that the establishment of a society free from all types of repression, manipulation, exclusion and violence is the thing most worth striving for amidst the traumas of conflict and tumultuous social, political and economic transitions. It is in this persistent guiding idealism, even while acknowledging the many difficult legacies of Yugoslav break-up, that post-Yugoslav cinemas reveal their greatest value for societies attempting to face an uncertain and challenging future.

Bibliography

- Agger, Inger, and S. B. Jensen. (1996). *Trauma and healing under state terrorism* (London: Zed Books)
- Ajeti, Blerton, and L. Hoti. (2008). "A short history of censorship in Kosovan cinema", in Matthieu Darras, and M. P. Cruz (eds.), *Balkan Identities, Balkan Cinemas* (Torino: NISI MASA), pp. 73-76
- Altman, Rick. (1984). "A Semantic/Syntactic Approach to Film Genre", *Cinema Journal*, 23(3): 6-18
- (1999). *Film/Genre* (London: BFI)
- Anderson, Benedict. (1983). *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso)
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. (1982). *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press)
- (1984). *Rabelais and his World* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons)
- Baudrillard, Jean, and M. Guillaume. (2008). *Radical Alterity* (Cambridge: MIT Press)
- Bauer, Susanne Monika, H. Steiner, M. Feucht, T. Stompe, N. Karnik, S. Kasper, and B. Plattner. (1977). "Psychosocial background in incarcerated adolescents from Austria, Turkey and former Yugoslavia", *Psychiatry Research*, 185(1): 193-199
- Bechmann-Pederson, Sune. (2012). "Treading New Paths", in Lars Kristensen (ed.), *Postcommunist Film – Russia, Eastern Europe and World Culture* (Abington: Routledge: Abingdon), pp. 121-133
- Bellamy, Alex J. (2003). *The Formation of Croatian National Identity: A Centuries Old Dream* (Manchester: Manchester University Press)
- Berry, Michael. (2008). *A History of Pain: Trauma in Modern Chinese Literature and Film* (New York: Columbia University Press)
- Beumers, Birgit. (1999). *Russia on Reels: The Russian Idea in Post-Soviet Cinema* (London: I.B. Tauris)
- (2010). "Nostalgic Journeys in Post-Soviet Cinema: Towards a Lost Home?", in Daniela Berghahn, and C. Sternberg (eds.), *European Cinema in Motion* (Palgrave: Basingstoke), pp. 96-113
- Bialostocki, Jan. (1981). "Forman's Cuckoo's Nest, Its Composition and Symbolism", *Artibus et Historiae*, 2 (3): pp 159-162
- Bilig, Michael. (1995). *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage)
- Biro, Miklos, and P. Milin. (2005). "Traumatic experience and the process of reconciliation", *Psihologija*, 38 (2): 133-138
- Bjelić, Dusan. (2005). "Global Aesthetics and the Serbian cinema of the 1990s", in Aniko Imre (ed.) *East European Cinemas* (Abington: Routledge) pp 103-120
- Bjelić, D., and O. Savić (eds). (2005). *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press)

- Blake, Linne. (2008). *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma and National Identity* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press)
- Bordwell, David. (1985). *Narration in the Fiction Film* (London: Methuen)
- Bracken, Patrick J., and C. Petty. (eds.). (1998) *Rethinking the Trauma of War* (London: Association Books)
- Brecht, Bertolt. (1970). "The alienation effect", in *Brecht's Works in English: A Bibliography* (New York: Crown Publishers), pp. 641-659
- Braudy, Leo. (1984). *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press)
- Brown, Keith. (2003). *The Past in Question: Modern Macedonia and the Uncertainties of Nation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)
- Cameron, Allan. (2010). *Modular Narratives in Contemporary Cinema* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-Macmillan)
- Caruth, Cathy. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press)
- Chandler, Daniel. (2007). *Semiotics: The Basics* (Abingdon: Routledge)
- Charteris-Black, Jonathan. (2005). *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor* (Basingstoke: Palgrave)
- Cohan, Steven, and I.R. Hark. (1997). *The Road Movie Book* (London: Routledge)
- Conover, Ted. (2011). *The Routes of Man: Travels in the Paved World* (New York: Vintage)
- Cowan, J. K., (ed). (2000). *Macedonia: The Politics of Identity and Difference* (London: Pluto Press)
- Crnković, Gordana. (2012). *Post-Yugoslav Literature & Film: Fires, Foundations, Flourishes* (London: Continuum)
- Cross, Simon. (2010). *Mediating Madness: Mental Distress and Cultural Representation*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)
- Crossley, Michele L. (2000). *Introducing Narrative Psychology: Self, trauma and the construction of meaning* (Buckingham: Open University Press)
- Daković, Nevena. (2004). "War in the Hall of Mirrors: NATO bombing and Serbian Cinema' in Hammond", in Andrew Hoerton (ed.), *The Balkans and the West: Constructing the European Other 1945-2003* (Aldershot: Ashgate), pp. 199-212
- (2008). "Out of the past: memories and nostalgia in (post-) Yugoslav cinema", in Oksana Sarkisova, and P. Apor (eds.), *Past For the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums after 1989* (Budapest: CEU Press), pp. 117-141
- Dickenson, Kay. (2010). "The Palestinian road (block) movie: Everyday geographies of second Intifada cinema", in Dina Iordanova, D. Martin-Jones, and B. Vidal (eds.), *Cinema at the Periphery* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press), pp. 137-155

- Dokić, Goran. (2009). *Psychosocial Transition in a Post-Socialist Context: Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Croatian Psychiatry* (Victoria, Australia: University of Victoria, MA dissertation)
- Djuretić, Tamara. (2007). "Role of qualitative research to inform design of epidemiological studies: A cohort study of mental health of migrants from the former Yugoslavia", *Journal of Mental Health*, 16(6): 743-755
- Duhaček, Daša. (2001). "Gender perspectives on political identities in Yugoslavia", in Miroslav Jovanović, and S. Naumović (eds.), *Gender Relations in South Eastern Europe* (Belgrade: Udruženje za društvenu istoriju), pp. XXXX
- Elsaesser, Thomas. (2000). *Wiemar Cinema and After* (Abington: Routledge)
- Epstein, Mikhail. (1995). *After the Future: The Paradoxes of Postmodernism and Contemporary Russian Culture* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press)
- Erb, Cynthia. (2006). "Have you ever seen inside one of those places?": *Psycho*, Foucault, and the Postwar Context of Madness", *Cinema Journal*, 45(4): 45-63
- Esslin, Martin. (2004). *The Theatre of the Absurd* (New York: Vintage)
- Felman, Shoshana. (1985). *Writing and Madness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press)
- Filipović, Ljiljana. (2003). "Film as an Abreaction to Totalitarianism: Vinko Brešan's Marshall Tito's Spirit", in Andrea Sabbadini (ed.), *The Couch and the Silver Screen: Psychoanalytic Reflections on European Cinema* (Hove: Brunner-Routledge), pp. 204-212
- Fleming, Michael, and R. Manvell. (1986). *Images of Madness: Portrayal of Insanity in the Feature Film* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press)
- Foucault, Michel. (1967). *Madness and Civilization* (Abingdon: Routledge)
- (1970). *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock)
- Fuery, Patrick. (2004). *Madness and Cinema: Psychoanalysis, Spectatorship and Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)
- Furlan, Mira. (1996). "A Letter to my Co-Citizens", *Performing Arts Journal*, 18(2): 20-24
- Gabbard, Glen, and K. Gabbard. (1999). *Psychiatry and the Cinema* (Washington: American Psychiatric Press)
- Garber, Marjorie. (2010). *Loaded Words* (New York: Fordham University Press)
- Gardner, William, O. (2004). "New Perceptions: Kinugusa Teinosuke's Films and Japanese Modernism", *Cinema Journal*, 43(3): 59-78
- Gavrilović, J., D. Lečić-Toševski, G. Knezević, and S. Priebe. (2002). "Predictors of posttraumatic stress in civilians 1 year after air attacks: A study of Yugoslavian students", *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 190: 257-262
- Gee, James P. (1999). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis* (London: Routledge)
- Gellner, Ernest. (1983). *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell)
- Georgescu, Lucian. (2012). "The road movies of the New Romanian Cinema", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 3(1): 23-40

- Gilberg, Trond. (2000). "Nation-building and nation-destroying", in Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Nationalism and globalization: east and west* (Singapore : Institute of Southeast Asian Studies), pp. 1-37
- Gold, Michael A. (2010). A. "Embodied Memory and Trauma: Recovering from Rape in Jasmila Zbanić's 'Grbavica'", *Student Pulse*, 2(3): 1-3
- Goulding, Daniel. (2002). *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience, 1945-2001*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press)
- Hammond, Andrew. (2005). "The danger zone of Europe: Balkanism between the cold war and 9/11", *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 8: 135-54.
- Harper, Stephen. (2009). *Madness, Power, and the Media: Class, Gender, and Race in Popular Representations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan)
- Hashamova, Yana. (2007). *Pride and Panic: Russian Imagination of the West in Post-Soviet Film* (Bristol: Intellect)
- Henderson, Karen, and N. Robinson (1997). *Post-Communist Politics: An Introduction* (Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall)
- Higson, Andrew. (2000). "The Limiting Imagination of National Cinema", in Mette Hjort, and S. Mackenzie (eds.), *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge), pp. 63-74
- Hirschfield, Marin. (2011). "Croatian cinematic identity: A Balkan entity or a European individual?", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 2(1): 21-36
- Hjort, Mette, and S. Mackenzie (eds.). (2000). *Cinema and Nation* (London: Routledge)
- Hjort, Mette, and D. J. Petrie (eds.). (2007). *The Cinema of Small Nations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)
- Holmes, Leslie. (1997). *Post-Communism: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press)
- Horne, John. (2010). *Entertaining madness: Questioning the continuing appeal of the screen asylum* (Birmingham, AL: University of Birmingham, MA dissertation)
- Hunt, Michael. C. (2010). *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Hunter, Jack. (1998). *Eros in Hell: Sex, Blood and Madness in Japanese Cinema* (London: Creation Books)
- Hutchings, Stephen (ed.). (2008). *Russia and its Others on Film: Screening Intercultural Dialogue* (London: Palgrave)
- Iordanova, Dina. (2001). *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture & Media* (London: BFI)
- (2005). "The Cinema of Eastern Europe: Strained Loyalties and Elusive Clusters", in Aniko Imre (ed.), *East European Cinemas* (New York: Routledge)
- (2008). "Intercultural cinema and Balkan hushed histories", *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, 6(1): 5-18.
- Iordanova, Dina, D. Martin-Jones, and B. Vidal (eds.). (2010). *Cinema at the Periphery* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press)
- Jameson, Fredric. (1991). *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism* (London: Verso)

- (2004). “Thoughts on Balkan Cinema”, in Atom Egoyan, and I. Balfour (eds.), *Subtitles: On the Foreignness of Film* (Cambridge: MIT Press) pp. 231-259
- Jović, Dejan. (2004). “Communist Yugoslavia and its Others”, in J. Lampe, & Mark Mazower, *Ideologies and National Identities: The case of 20th century Southeastern Europe* (Budapest: Central European University Press), pp. 277-302
- Kaye, Janice, L. (2007). *Certain Tendencies in the Canadian Cinema: Temporary Insanity and the National Tax Shelter Masquerade* (Los Angeles: University of Southern California, PhD Thesis)
- Kaes, Anton. (2009). *Shell shock cinema: Weimar culture and the wounds of war* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press)
- Kaplan, Ann E., and B. Wang (eds.). (2004). *Trauma and Cinema: Cross-Cultural Explorations* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press)
- Rimmon-Kenan, Shlomith. (1983). *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London: Methuen)
- Kennedy, Randall. (2003). *Niger: The Strange Career of a Troublesome Word* (New York: Vintage Books)
- Koebel, Caroline. (2009). “Torture, maternity, and truth in Jasmila Zbanić’s *Grbavica: Land of My Dreams*”, *Jump Cut: A Review of Contemporary Media*, *Jump Cut*, 51
- Kolsto, Pal. (2000). *Political Construction Sites: Nation-Building in Russia and Post-Soviet States* (Oxford: Westview Press)
- (ed.). (2009). *Media Discourse and the Yugoslav Conflicts* (Farnham: Ashgate)
- Korać, Maja. (2004). “War, Flight, and Exile: Gendered Violence among Refugee Women from Post-Yugoslav States”, in Wenona Giles and J. Hyndman (eds.), *Sites of Violence: Gender and Conflict Zones* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), pp. 249-272
- Kristensen, Lars (ed.). (2012). *Postcommunist Film – Russia, Eastern Europe and World Culture: Moving images of postcommunism* (Abingdon: Routledge)
- Kronja, Ivana. (2004). “Turbo Folk and Dance Music in 1990s Serbia: Media, Ideology and the Production of Spectacle”, *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 22(1): 103-114
- (2009). “The Aesthetics of Paranoid Realities in the *Land of Truth, Love and Freedom* and *South by South-East* by Milutin Petrović”, *KinoKultura*, <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/8/kronja.shtml>
- Kuusisto, Rikka. (2004). “Savage Tribes and Mystic Feuds: Western Foreign Policy Statement on Bosnia in the early 1990s”, in Andrew Hammond (ed.), *The Balkans and the West: Constructing the European Other 1945-2003* (Ashgate: Aldershot) pp 169-183
- LaCapra, Dominick. (1994). *Representing the Holocaust: History, Theory, Trauma* (London: Cornell University Press)
- Laing, Ronald D. (1960). *The Divided Self* (London: Penguin)

- Landy, Marcia. (2007). "Dom Durakov – House of Fools", in Birgit Beumers (ed.), *The Cinema of Russia and the former Soviet Union* (London: Wallflower), pp. 253-262
- Lefebvre, Martin (ed.). (2006). *Landscape and Film* (New York: Routledge)
- Le Roy, Frederik, C. Stalpaert, and S. Verdoodt. (2011). "Introduction. Performing Cultural Trauma in Theatre and Film. Between Representation and Experience.", *Arcadia: International Journal of Literary Culture*, 45(2): 249-264
- Lersner, Ulrike von, T. Elbert, and F. Neuner. (2008). "Mental health of refugees following state-sponsored repatriation from Germany", *BMC Psychiatry*, 8: article no. 88
- Levi, Pavle. (2007). *Disintegration in Frames: Aesthetics and Ideology in the Yugoslav and Post-Yugoslav Cinema* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press)
- Longinović, Tomislav. (2005). "Playing the Western Eye: Balkan Cinema and post-Yugoslav War Cinema", in Aniko Imre (ed.), *East European Cinemas* (New York: Routledge)
- Lowenstein, Adam. (2005). *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* (New York: Columbia University Press)
- Macey, David. (2001). *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (London: Penguin)
- Mandušić, Zdenko. (2012). "Compromising Images: Film History, the films of Jasmila Žbanić, and Visual Representation of Bosnian Women", *KinoKultura* 14 (<http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/14/mandusic.shtml>)
- Mazierska, Ewa. (2004). "Domesticating Madness, Revisiting Polishness: The Cinema of Marek Koterski", *Journal of Film and Video*, 56(3): 20-34
- (2010). "Eastern European cinema: old and new approaches", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 1(1): 5-16
- McMahon, Gary. (2010). "oN thE eDGe", *Film International*, 8(1): 7-10
- McMahon, Gary. (2011). "I'm mad as hell, and I'm not gonna take this anymore!: Insane cinema." *Film International* 9(3): 7-18
- Metz, Christian. (1974). *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press)
- Miller, Jacques-Alain (ed.). (1997). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (New York: W.W. Norton and company)
- Milutinović, Zoran. (2013). "What common Yugoslav culture was and how everybody benefited from it", in Radmila Gorup (ed.), *After Yugoslavia: The Cultural Spaces of a Vanished Land* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), pp. 75-87
- Morris, Gary. (2006). *Mental Health Issues and the Media: An Introduction for Health Professionals* (Abington: Routledge)
- Norris, David. (2013). "Writing about War: Making Sense of the Absurd in Mileta Prodanović's Novel 'Pleši, Čudovište, na moju Nežnu Muziku' (Dance, You Monster, to my Soft Music)", *The Modern Language Review*, 108(2): 597-618
- Okey, Robin. (2004). *The Demise of Communist East Europe: 1989 in Context* (London: Hodder Arnold)

- Paris, Roland. (2002). "Kosovo and the metaphor war", *Political Science Quarterly*, 117(3): 423-450
- Pavičić, Jurica. (2010). "Cinema of normalisation: changes of stylistic model in post-Yugoslav cinema after the 1990s", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 1(1): 43-56.
- Peterson, James. (1989). "A War of Utter Rebellion: Kinugasa's *Page of Madness* and the Japanese avant-Garde of the 1920s", *Cinema Journal*, 29(1): 36-53
- Philo, Greg (ed.). (1996). *Media and Mental Distress* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman)
- Pogačar, Martin. (2010). "Yugoslav Past in Film and Music: Yugoslav Interfilmic Referentiality", in Breda Luthar and M. Pusnik (eds.), *Remembering Utopia: The culture of everyday life in socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: New Academia Publishing), pp. 199-224
- Porter, Roy. (1996). *A social history of madness: Stories of the insane* (Phoenix: Orion)
- (2002). *Madness: A brief history* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Propp, Vladimir. (1968). *Morphology of the Folk Tale* (translated by Laurence Scott) (Austin: University of Texas Press, Austin)
- Ramet, Sabrina P. (2005). *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- (ed.). (2009). *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- Richter, Alexander. (2008). "Kukumi, Isa Qosja", in Matthieu Darras, and M. P. Cruz (eds.), *Balkan Identities, Balkan Cinemas* (Torino: NISI MASA), p. 77
- Rosenstone, Robert A. (2012). *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow: Pearson)
- Rouland, Michael, G. Abikeyeva, and B. Beumers (eds.). (2013). *Cinema in Central Asia: Rewriting Cultural Histories* (London: I.B. Tauris)
- Scull, Andrew. (2011). *Madness: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- Schatz, Thomas. (1981). *Hollywood Genres: Formulas, Filmmaking, and the Studio System* (New York: McGraw-Hill)
- Shklovsky, Viktor B. (1973). "Sviaz' priemov siuzhetoslozheniia s obschimi priemami stilia", in *Poetika. Sborniki po teorii poeticheskogo iazyka*, (Petrograd, 1919), pp. 115-50; translated as "On the Connection Between Devices of Syzhet and General Stylistic Devices", in S. Bann, and J. Bowt (eds.), *Russian Formalism: A Collection of Articles and Texts in Translation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academy Press), pp. 48-72
- Sontag, Susan. (1983). *Illness as Metaphor* (London: Penguin Books)
- Sretenović, Dejan. (2003). "Art in a closed society", *Int. Contemporary Art Network*, Article no. 86 (http://www.c3.hu/ican.artnet.org/ican/textd224.html?id_text=36)

- Stam, Robert. (1989). *Subversive Pleasures: Bakhtin, Cultural Criticism, and Film* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press)
- Stam, Robert, R. Burgoyne, and S. Flitterman-Lewis. (1992). *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-structuralism and Beyond* (London: Routledge)
- Stam, Robert, R. Burgoyne, and S. Flitterman-Lewis. (1992). *New Vocabularies in Film Semiotics: Structuralism, Post-Structuralism and Beyond* (Abington: Routledge)
- Sugar, P. F., (ed.). (1995). *Eastern European Nationalism* (Washington DC: American University Press)
- Szasz, Thomas. (1987). *Insanity: The Idea and its Consequences* (New York: John Wiley)
- Tal, Kali. (1996). *Worlds of Hurt: Reading the Literatures of Trauma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)
- The Committee on Nomenclature and Statistics of the American Psychiatric Association. (1952). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association)
- Todorova, Maria. (1997). *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)
- van der Kolk, Bessel A. (1996). *Traumatic Stress: The effects of overwhelming experience on mind, body and society* (New York: Guilford Press)
- Velikonja, Mitja. (2008). *Titostalgia* (Ljubljana: Peace Institute)
- Vidan, Aida. (2011). "Spaces of ideology in South Slavic films", *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 2(2): 73-192
- Wahl, Otto F. (1995). *Media Madness: Public Images of Mental Illness* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press)
- Williams, Linda. (1981). "Film Madness: The Uncanny Return of the Repressed in Polanski's *The Tenant*", *Cinema Journal*, 20(2): 63-73
- Wills, Claire. (1989). "Upsetting the public: carnival, hysteria and women's texts", in Ken Hisekopp, and D. Sheperd (eds.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), pp. 85-108
- Wollen, Peter. (1969). *Signs and Meaning in Cinema* (London: Thames & Hudson)
- Young, Deborah. (2005). "Review: The 'Kukum'", *Variety*, 30 August.

Filmography

- A Beautiful Mind*, dir. Ron Howard, 2001. [USA]
- Absolute Hundred (Absolutnih Sto)*, dir. Srdjan Golubović, 2001. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]
- Adaptation (Adaptatziya)*, dir. Vulo Radev, 1981. [Bulgaria]
- As If I Am Not There (Kao Da Me Nema)*, dir. Juanita Wilson, 2009. [Germany, Ireland, Macedonia, Sweden]
- A Page of Madness (Kurutta Ippēji)*, dir. Teinosuke Kinugasa, 1926. [Japan]
- Balkan Spy (Balkanski Špijun)*, dir. Dušan Kovačević, and Božidar Nikolić, 1984. [Yugoslavia]
- Beach Guard in Winter (Čuvar Plaže u Zimskom Periodu)*, dir. Goran Paskaljević, 1976. [Yugoslavia]
- Before the Rain (Pred Doždot)*, dir. Milčo Mančevski, 1994. [France, Macedonia, UK]
- Black Cat, White Cat (Crna Mačka, Beli Mačor)*, dir. Emir Kusturica, 1998. [Austria, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, France, Germany, Greece, USA]
- The Blacks (Crnci)*, dir. Goran Dević and Zvonimir Jurić, 2009. [Croatia]
- Burlesque Tragedy (Urnebesna Tragedija)*, dir. Goran Marković, 1995. [Bulgaria, France]
- Cabaret Balkan (Bure Baruta)*, dir. Goran Paskaljević, 1999. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, France, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey]
- The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari (Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari)*, dir. Robert Wiene, 1920. [Germany]
- Contact (Kontakt)*, dir. Sergej Stanojkovski, 2005. [Germany, Macedonia]
- The Cordon (Kordon)*, dir. Goran Marković, 2002. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]
- Doctor of Madness (Doktor Ludosti)*, dir. Fadil Hadžić, 2003. [Croatia]
- Déjà vu (Već Vidjeno)*, dir. Goran Marković, 1987. [Yugoslavia]
- Donkey (Kenjac)*, dir. Antonio Nuic, 2009. [Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, UK]
- Donkeys of the Border (Gomaret e Gufirit)*, dir. Jeton Ahmetaj, 2010. [Kosovo]
- Dorcol Manhattan (Dorcol Menhetn)*, dir. Isidora Bjelica, 2000. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]
- Fight Club*, dir. David Fincher, 1999. [Germany, USA]
- The Fourth Man (Četvrti Čovek)*, dir. Dejan Zečević, 2007. [Serbia]
- Full Metal Jacket*, dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1987. [UK, USA]
- Fuse (Gori Vatra)*, dir. Pjer Žalica, 2003. [Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, France, Turkey]
- Girl Interrupted*, dir. James Mangold, 1999. [Germany, USA]
- Grbavica (Grbavica)*, dir. Jasmila Žbanić, 2006. [Austria, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany]

Guardians of the Fog (Rojet e Mjegulles), dir. Isa Qosja, 1988. [Yugoslavia]

Hobnail (Proka), dir. Isa Qosja, 1984. [Yugoslavia]

Hospital of the Transfiguration (Szpital Przemienienia), dir. Edward Zebrowski, 1978. [Poland]

The Hourglass Sanatorium (Sanatorium pod Klepsydra), dir. Wojciech Has, 1973. [Poland]

House of Fools (Dom Durakov), dir. Andrei Konchalovskii, 2002. [France, Russia]

How the War Started on My Island (Kako Je Počeo Rat na Mom Otoku), dir. Vinko Brešan, 1996. [Croatia]

Idle Running (V Leru), dir. Janez Burger, 1999. [Slovenia]

Innocence Unprotected (Nevinost Bez Zaštite), dir. Dušan Makavejev, 1968. [Yugoslavia]

Jasmina and War (Jasmina i Rat), dir. Milutin Petrović, 1999. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]

Jungle Book, dir. Zoltan Korda, 1942. [UK, USA]

Kukumi (Kukumi), dir. Isa Qosja, 2005. [Kosovo]

Land of Truth, Love and Freedom (Zemlja Istine, Ljubavi, i Slobode), dir. Milutin Petrović, 2000. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]

Love Affair, or the Case of the Missing Switchboard Operator (Ljubavni Slučaj ili Tragedija Službenice P.T.T), dir. Dušan Makavejev, 1967. [Yugoslavia]

Loving Glances (Sjaj u Očima), dir. Srdjan Karanović, 2003. [Serbia & Montenegro, UK]

Lunacy (Sileni), dir. Jan Švankmajer, 2005. [Czech Republic, Slovakia, Japan]

Mirage (Iluzija), dir. Svetozar Ristovski, 2004. [Macedonia]

Marshall Tito's Spirit (Maršal), dir. Vinko Brešan, 1999. [Croatia]

The Magic Sword (Čudotvorni Mač), dir. Vojislav Nanović, 1950. [Yugoslavia]

No Man's Land (Ničija Zemlja), dir. Danis Tanović, 2001. [Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, France, Italy, Slovenia, UK]

No One's Son (Ničiji Sin), dir. Ostojić, 2008. [Croatia, Slovenia]

Once Brothers, dir. Michael Tolajian, 2010. [USA]

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, dir. Miloš Forman, 1975. [USA]

Opium: Diary of a Madwoman (Opium: Egy Elmebeteg no Naploja), dir. Janos Szasz, 2007. [Germany, Hungary, USA]

The Optimists (Optimisti), dir. Goran Paskaljević, 2006. [Serbia]

Pretty Village, Pretty Flame (Lepa Sela Lepo Gore), dir. Srdjan Dragojević, 1996. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]

Promise Me This (Zavet), dir. Emir Kusturica, 2007. [France, Serbia]

Pulp Fiction, dir. Quentin Tarantino, 1994. [USA]

Simon of the Desert (Simon del Desierto), dir. Luis Bunuel, 1965. [Mexico]

Sinbad the Sailor, dir. Richard Wallace, 1947. [USA]

Sky Hook (Nebeska Udica), dir. Ljubiša Samardžić, 1999. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Italy]

South by Southeast (Jug Jugoistok), dir. Milutin Petrović, 2005. [Serbia & Montenegro]

Special Education (Specijalno Vaspitanje), dir. Goran Marković, 1976. [Yugoslavia]

Stalker (Stalker), dir. Andrei Tarkovsky, 1979. [Soviet Union]

The Thief of Baghdad, dirs. Ludwig Berger, M. Powell, and T. Whelan, 1940. [UK]

Tito among the Serbs for the Second Time (Tito po Drugi Put medju Srbima), dir. Želimir Žilnik, 1993. [Federal republic of Yugoslavia]

Tito and Me (Tito i Ja), dir. Goran Marković, 1992. [Federal republic of Yugoslavia]

Tonight is Cancelled, dir. Brendan Grant, 2007. [Ireland]

Twelve Monkeys, dir. Terry Gilliam, 1995. [USA]

Underground (Podzemlje), dir. Emir Kusturica, 1995. [Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, France, Germany, Hungary]

War Live! (Rat Uživo!), dir. Darko Bajić, 2000. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]

Ward No. 6 (Palata No. 6), dir. Lucian Pintilie, 1973. [Yugoslavia]

Ward No. 6 (Palata No. 6), dir. Karen Shakhnazarov, and Aleksandr Gornovsky, 2009. [Russia]

The Wedding Tape (Kaseta e Dasmes), dir. Ariel Shaban, 2011. [Germany, Kosovo]

Welcome Mr. Marshall (Bienvenido Mister Marshall), dir. Luis Garcia Berlanga, 1953. [Spain]

When Father was Away on Business (Otac na Službenom Putu), dir. Emir Kusturica, 1985. [Yugoslavia]

When I Am Dead and Gone (Kad Budem Mrtav i Beo), dir. Živojin Pavlović, 1967. [Yugoslavia]

Wherever You Are (Gdzieskolwiek Jest, Jeslis Jest), dir. Krzystof Zanussi, 1988. [France, Italy, Poland, West Germany, UK]

Who is Singing over There? (Ko To Tamo Peva), dir. Slobodan Šijan, 1980. [Yugoslavia]

Wounded Country (Ranjena Zemlja), dir. Dragoslav Lazić, 1999. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]

Wounds (Rane), dir. Srdjan Dragojević, 1998. [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Germany]

WR: Mysteries of the Organism (W.R. – Misterija Organizma), dir. Dušan Makavejev, 1971. [Yugoslavia]

Director Interviews

- Marković, Goran. "With a Tale of Madness, Marković Offers a Political Assessment of His Nation" by Marc Semo. *Liberation*. 26 April 2000. Print. (Web version last accessed 9/2/14 <http://www.liberation.fr/culture/0101330968-a-travers-une-histoire-de-fous-Marković-livre-une-critique-politique-de-son-pays-belgrade-en-prend-pour-son-grade-tragedie-burlesque-de-goran-Marković-france-bulgarie-1996-scenario-de-dusan-kovacevic->)
- Qosja, Isa. Interview for *Kukumi* Press Release. Festival on Wheels Website. Website. (Last accessed 9/2/14 http://festivalonwheels.org/archive_film_cinema.aspx?id=858)
- Petrović, Milutin. "Movies are People Who Appear in Them – Interview with Milutin Petrović" by Saša Markuš. *Cinesta*. Website. (Last accessed 9/2/14 http://cineasta.casadelest.org/uk/template_permalink.asp?id=112)
- Zbanić, Jasmila. Interview for *Grbavica* Press Release. Official Website. Website. (Last accessed 9/2/14 http://www.coop99.at/grbavica_website/regie_int_en_03.htm)